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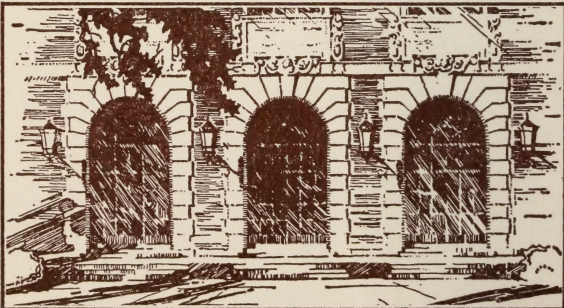
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THE THIRST

FOR

THE LIVING GOD.

BY

REV. FRANCIS G. PEABODY, D.D.



PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

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"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man."

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THE THIRST FOR THE LIVING GOD.

“My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.” — PSALMS, xlii, 2.

I wish to speak to you of the signs of the times in which we live; but it seems as if I must be mistaken in my text. Certainly the distinctive mark of our generation does not at once appear to be its thirst for a living God. At the first glance, indeed, no text could seem less applicable. The conspicuous activities and occupations of the time are so far removed from any such devout desire, the thirst of the time is so insatiable for its new resources of knowledge, luxury and power, that such a text, chosen to represent the spirit of the age, may well seem absurdly misapplied. It is much easier to talk — as so many do talk — of the age as without any living God, a worldly, indifferent, scientific, materialistic, godless time. Thirst enough there seems to be — a thirst which is almost feverish — for the possessions, ambitions, and indulgences of the time, but where, we may lightly ask, is the thirst for God? Yet when the deeper impulses of the age are more carefully scrutinized, and as its larger tendencies disclose themselves, this first impression is not likely to last. The fact is that there seems to be one kind of living and thinking on the surface of the age, and quite another kind, moving quite another way, within its depths. The one is like the eddies which diversify a stream; the

other is the current which underlies them; and it is as though we were watching such a stream, whose eddies are so turbulent and refluxing that its true course seems reversed. Quietly and silently the deeper current of the time sweeps on, yet it makes itself felt at last. When in some later age a philosophic historian looks back upon the characteristics of our time, he is not likely to be so misled by its superficial character as to call it an indifferent or a godless time. He will be judging then not by the eddies, but by the underlying current, and he will observe there a sweep of tendency very different from that which at first forces itself upon our view. Beneath all the bewildering activities and splendid acquisitions of our day, he will, I feel sure, observe an ever-increasing and profound sense of dissatisfaction with these results. He will see that these very interests which seemed so absorbing opened of their own accord into larger interests and deeper problems. Looking back thus upon us, such a student will certainly not be able to say that this was an age of conviction or of faith, but he can hardly help speaking of it as a *thirsty* time, a generation in which, after the briefest possible self-glorifying and sense of gain, there has come over thoughtful minds a great dissatisfaction, as though all that was known would be worse than vanity unless it opened out into the assurance of something more.

Thus the text which I have chosen may be untrue to the superficial living which prevails in this as in every age, but I believe it strikes with increasing clearness the note of the heart of the time. There is scarcely a phase of philosophy about us, or a really profound experience which we observe, which does not illustrate the increasing thirst of the human soul for the living God. Beneath the harsh noises of our day there is this permanent undertone, continuing like the sounds of nature

which we hear only as other noises are stilled. Amid this apparent satiety and self-sufficiency of the age, there appears this divine restlessness. Each gain in things which appear to make a living God superfluous seems to compel men to some new aspect of religion, or to some new substitute for faith. A thirsty time; — not a time when the soul is satisfied, but when it is growing parched even to torture, and is demanding that its **thirst** be somehow slaked, — a time when souls and systems are coming, as the Psalmist says that the deer comes in summer, to springs that once ran free, and are finding there nothing but dry, hot stones, and then, panting for the water brooks, are turning from these barren resources of the past and thirsting for the signs of a present and living God, — such is the scene which the age, in its deeper living and thinking, seems to present, and which contradicts and corrects our first impression of the times. It is this underlying and fundamental character which I wish now very imperfectly to trace. Let us see this deeper desire uttering itself, first, in the thought of the time, and then in its life, and then let us ask ourselves what we can do to meet and satisfy this profound and spiritual thirst.

Take, in the first place, the philosophy of the time, and consider the outcome of those forms of philosophy which, to the religious mind, are most unpromising and repelling. For the last twenty years philosophical unbelief has been taking shape among English-speaking people under two types. One we call positivism, the other agnosticism. Now, whatever these two types of thought had to debate about they seemed to have this one point of agreement — that each of them expressly withheld the thoughts of men from any sense of a living God. Yet, strangely enough, nothing which the history of the times presents seems to illustrate so strongly as do these very schools of thought the increasing thirst of philoso-

phy for a genuine religious life. It may be said that they do not give this satisfying conviction, but it cannot be said, in the light of their last expressions, that they do not thirst for it. Each of them, having run its brief course of reaction and of denial, has already set itself to the renewal — nay, to the deepening — of the religious emotions which it seemed to ignore. We are even brought, in the most striking way, to a time of collision and controversy between the two, each of them maintaining, with no slight heat, that in it alone lie the elements of true religion and the satisfaction of this human thirst. On the one hand is the theologian of the unknowable, and on the other hand the devotee of the unworshipable, each bent upon emphasizing the very elements in the conception of a living God which the other is forced to omit. One is inspired by the mystery of the universe; the other by the dignity of human life. One sees behind the play of nature's forces that unknown force "from which all things proceed;" to the other, religion is religion only as it is addressed to that which can be known and loved.

Thus, from one point of view, each deliverance is as negative as it can well be. The one may be justly called the "ghost of a religion;" the other cannot be called even that ghost which shows that a reality has been some time there. Yet, from another and profounder point of view, each is contributing an essential part to the thought of a living God. The one offers the element of power; the other that of love. Each is expressing to the utmost which the system permits, this demand of life for the permanently real. Each feels the necessity of satisfying this restlessness of the age for that which it can revere. Each recognizes that in this satisfaction lies the test of the system and the largest problem of its thought. What does all this mean, but so much testimony from the most unprejudiced witnesses that the intellectual thirst of

the age is for something which can be called a living God?

Or take, once more, what seems to me one of the most curious and instructive phases of philosophy among us, — that which calls itself the “ethical movement.” Here is, at first sight, another attempt of a far more practical and sympathetic kind to withdraw the attention of the time from all that is not tangible and human to the immediate problems and tragedies of human needs. Not a living God, but a living and improved human society, is what it thirsts to see. Not a distant heaven, it says, but a present earth, is the true scene of regeneration. Not worship, but work, is the true offering. I need not say what a reproach is offered to the work of the Christian Church when in the midst of its activities it could occur even to a few people that any such ethical enterprise needed undertaking. It is the practical confession that the people whose business it is to do the work are not doing it. Surely one ought to be able to turn on any society for ethical culture and say — as a distinguished layman once said when asked to join a society for the prevention of pauperism — “I belong to one such society already; the Christian Church.” But the ethical movement has a deeper lesson than this to teach. It goes its way of reaction and self-exclusion as though its principles naturally separated it from the worshipping world, but when it comes to give account of these principles, its dynamic is no other than that which has always inspired moral sacrifices and found beauty in duty-doing. The ethical aim fulfils itself and it opens into ideals which are manifestly religious. When a man frankly commits himself to principles of idealism, when he is able to say that he keeps the sense of union “with that universal life to whose influence we have opened the channels of our being,” when he “feels constrained to interpret the uni-

verse in terms of goodness," then I should not feel satisfied to classify such a man as a "suppressed Theist," for his Theism appears to me confessed and undisguised. It may be in vain to say here, as it was in vain to say of Mr. Spencer or of Mr. Harrison, that permanent peace is discovered for religious faith, but surely there is nothing testified to by the ethical movement if it be not an increasing tendency to recognize the religious aspect of conduct and to satisfy the thirst of the time for a living God.

Only two generations ago the great philosopher Fichte passed through much the same transition in his thought which this ethical movement is now exhibiting, and I have always found the history of his mind among the most instructive incidents which any student can examine. In his first phase of development the moral order of the world was to him enough to believe. Kant's Imperative controlled his thought. Ethical passion filled his writing. "This moral order," he cried, "is God and we need no other." But soon his teaching assumes a wholly different tone. Ethical culture, instead of satisfying the life of the soul, now demonstrates to him that the life of the soul is undeveloped. Truly to live, one's life must be merged in the Universal life which is the great reality. So long as one would be anything of himself, his true life has not begun. Thus, in his first phase, the one abiding reality was the moral personality of the individual; in his second phase the one abiding reality was that central life of which the individual was but the reflection. This transition in Fichte's thought has usually been described as a revolution. It has been supposed that there lay an unbridged chasm between his earlier and his later works; and that he frankly accepted this self-contradiction. It was not until one of our own Unitarian scholars examined the work of Fichte that the unity throughout the whole was observed. Fichte himself announced in

his later writings that this unity existed in his mind. It was not self-contradiction, it was only enlargement of view, which led him from the ethical to the religious position. The one when completely analyzed was seen to rest upon the other. The only sufficient foundation for moral culture was in confidence toward the universe. The only adequate impulse for self-development was the spirit of self-surrender. He who would save his life must lose it, and he who was ready to lose it, the same would find it. I find in this incident of history, as in the ethical movement which it prefigures, solemn lessons both for the moralists and for the Churches. On the one hand, let not those in whom moral purposes are thus compelling imagine that they have a conflict with the methods of religion. The only way in which such a conflict can be prolonged must be through lack of philosophy and ignorance of history. Given a pure impulse to self-sacrifice for the good of men, and with it any degree of power in philosophical analysis, and sooner or later the ethical intention will discover that its motive power and permanent inspiration are nothing less than the thirst for a manifestation of the living God. And, on the other hand, let not the Churches suppose that, in lessening their emphasis on worship, in absorbing themselves in what men call practical usefulness, and shaping themselves into ethical-culture clubs, they are likely to satisfy more completely the life of the time. The dynamic of Church work remains what it has always been, — the sense of the *divine reality*. Let the Churches take to themselves the full reproach of the ethical movement, and apply themselves to a better philanthropy, but let them take this other lesson of the same movement, — its confession that the sources of the moral force are intangible and ideal. It would be a sad day for any religious body if in its desire to be as ethical as the ethicists, it should depreciate the moral lift of religious inspiration.

It would be trying to pluck the fruits of life without fostering the roots of life. Here is the ethical movement, lifting its ethics into faith. Let it not meet any of us trying to turn our religion into terms of ethics. People may meet each other thus, standing as it were on the same step of opinion, but it makes a vast difference whether one is on his way up or on his way down.

I have dwelt too long upon these intellectual illustrations of the thirst of the time, — a thirst which will not be satisfied until philosophy has found a living God. For, after all, this ferment of the philosophies is but a suggestion of the spiritual restlessness which possesses multitudes about us, whether they study philosophy or not. What are the facts? All over this country there are thousands of thoughtful lives, trained in modern ways of thinking, beyond the reach of ecclesiasticism or of orthodoxy, yet with this great thirst upon their souls, panting, like the hart for the water brooks, for some assurance of a living God. These are the souls which test the force and the sympathy of a church or a minister. They do not demand a complicated or elaborate faith, but they thirst for faith in something. They yield themselves, in the lack of something better, to the most extravagant substitutes for faith. Anything, if it be nothing more religious than tipping tables or “astral bodies,” is precious to them if it seems to suggest supernatural control. Their doubts and problems are not concerned with the details of belief; it is the very foundation which is undermined. A few years ago a young man came to me with his religious questionings. I never can forget his fierce and passionate attack. “Do not suppose,” he said, “that I am not a good Baptist. I am a member of the Church. I am ‘sound on immersion.’ But tell me, tell me if you can, whether or no there is any *living God*.” I do not need to delay in describing such experiences as this. It is this eager, receptive, waiting mood,

found in every community, which gives the chief human impulse to the life of a modern minister. It fills the preacher's work with a new exhilaration, for he is not dealing with a controversy against other forms of faith, but with a positively constructive work. It does not much matter for this end precisely wherein the confidence of his faith may lie. Let him believe *anything* concerning the ways of God supremely and announce his faith rationally and he is satisfying the thirst of many souls. Here is a time when many critics are observing the decline of religious influence and the decrease of Church attendance. It seems to me a time much more marked for the wonderful eagerness with which people still turn to the ministry of any man who speaks as if his religion were real. It is one more mark of the weary waiting and the divine discontent which marks the time, and which draws it, like the hart to the water brooks, toward any voice or Church or substitute for Church which seems likely to supply its thirst.

Such, then, it seems to me, is the deeper meaning of the signs of the times. And if, beneath its varied conflicts, there is this one demand of philosophy and life, then certainly it is time to ask some questions concerning the way in which this want is to be supplied. In the first place, then, I ask: "What is the kind of Church which is needed at such a time?" We talk of shaping the Church to suit the time! Well, what is the Church that suits the time? If we were to judge by the superficial look of the age we should be likely to say that the times demand a sensational, spectacular, secularized Church. This is precisely what many persons plead in thus perverting their Churches — that the times compel them to put lectures in the place of prayers and kitchens in the place of altars. But those who so judge are not really interpreting the time in those deeper movements which it is the very function of a Church to represent. The real demand of the

times, forcing itself upon us with a peculiar emphasis, is for Churches where the sense of God shall be living and real. There are many other things that may please, attract, and seem to satisfy, but the fundamental thirst which is created by the thought and the life of the times, is for this and nothing less. It is possible to be a preacher and to preach, not a living, but a dead God. It is possible to be a preacher and to preach on living themes, but not to preach on God at all. It is not for either of these ministrations that the world is really waiting. Each of them does its share in driving thirsty souls away from the Churches. When does a man preach a dead God? It is when his faith is retrospective, when the signs of divine control are clearer in the distant past than they are to-day, when the tendencies of the time seem to him all wrong, and the collapse of faith is imminent. This is the pessimism of religion. This is the atheism of theology. And yet this man is not preaching a dead God any more than he who has a brand-new, unhistorical faith to deliver, as though God had been waiting till now to be discovered, and the only method of revelation were a method of to-day. The preacher of the living God must have the historic sense. He must come not to destroy but to fulfil. It must be one law and one love which he discerns, binding the past with the present in the comprehensive unfolding of an Infinite design. "It is the law of human life," says Ruskin in a prophetic passage, "that we shall not build in the air, but in the already high-storied temple of the thoughts of our ancestors. The stronger of us may bring for increase of height some small white stone and on the stone a new name written, which is indeed done by those ordered to such masonry, nor ever in any great degree except by persons trained reverently in some large portion of the wisdom of the past."

So, on the other hand, with the preaching of themes which are living but are not divine. I do not wonder that in reaction from a theology which seemed dead the pulpit has been tempted by any subject which seemed living. A congregation, like any other audience, must be interested before it can be taught. A Church in these days must deal with that which is practical or die. And here, on the surface of the times, there presents itself, as we began by seeing, this great demand for instruction and culture and amusements which a Church may easily mistake for the real thirst of the soul. But it is not. Philosophy has shown us that it is not. Glimpses of personal experience have shown us that it is not. The Church which addresses itself, first of all, to these concerns which seem living and practical because they are superficial, is simply missing the wonderful opportunity which the times providentially present. It is watching the eddies, not the current of the age. People may seem to want to be entertained, cultivated, and amused through the ministration of religion, but the real want of the time is for a profounder help; and wherever there meets the life of the time the simple and rational preaching of a living God, there are the great successes of the pulpit. We hear it said that preaching should not be over the heads of the people, and that one must preach *down* to reach them. I am inclined to fear far more that the pulpit may be misled into not preaching *up* to the larger and higher needs of life; or, rather, it is not a question of up or down but a question of *in*, of penetrating beneath the apparent tendencies and interests of the age to the permanent and profounder need. A time when the pressure of life crowds out from so many minds the thought of God is the last of times to which the pulpit should adjust itself. It is the very time when the preaching of a living God comes with its full effect. High themes, confident

faith, undisguised devoutness — these are the qualities which tell with double force when so many waver and retreat. People long to have the events of the time, its social troubles, its national crises, its business methods, its home experiences, and all the multitudinous incidents of life which seem to have so little in them that is divine, taken up into the ways of God, so that the light of the presence of a living God shall shine through them with its infinite prodigality and give them a meaning which they did not have before. Many a weary listener has felt this deep demand as he has waited through a sermon which dealt with what was living, but was economical of what was eternal. “Oh! for some answer,” he has murmured, “to the deeper human cry; for some enlargement of the theme into the proper realm of worship.” Throughout this ministration, however scientific or artistic or literary it may be, there is no complete satisfaction for that thirst which is slaked by nothing less than communion with the eternal. “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.”

This then is the Church for the times — the Church of a living God. And now I ask once more : How is this kind of Church to be strengthened and developed ? It has its two factors — its minister and its people — and for each of these I have a word to say. On the one hand, I want to speak of that which is really a subordinate matter — the minister’s intellectual life. It seems to me that the times demand of the clergy just what we often hear it said, that the times have outgrown, — *a revival of theological study*. A great many people, and among them a great many preachers, think that “live preaching” has not much to do with theology and had better let it alone. Such persons are commending that which is impossible. A man who is to preach about God and about duty, has but two theological alternatives. He can choose between

bad theology and good theology; but even while he is condemning theology, he is theologizing. I know very well what can be said in scorn of theology. Theology is not religion. Libraries are not the only fountains of inspiration. "The measure of learning," as the beginner of modern theology once for all said, "is not the measure of piety." I know that if the study of theology is to remain a fit introduction to the ministry of religion, theology must have a broader definition. It must include all the evidence which leads to God. It must claim for its department the study of philanthropy as well as the study of opinions. It must include the literature of devoutness as well as the literature of dogmatics. And yet I feel sure that it is a dangerous time for the preaching of a living God, when ministers are so easily diverted from the themes of theology, thus broadly defined, as the centre of their studies. A minister stands for a specialty. His office is the maintenance of the religious life. He is to preach about God. Now it is possible that he should strengthen his own religious convictions through the literature of art or science or *belles-lettres*, but he is certainly not thus approaching most directly to his theme. He is not doing what other specialists do, or what commands the respect of other specialists. Knowing little of theology, he will easily fall into the ranks of those who think there is little to know, just as smatterers in science are the first to offer hasty judgments and easy ridicule concerning scientific affairs. Add to this the strength contributed to any mind by contact with great and comprehensive thinkers of one's own calling. Whether one is to agree or not with the great philosophers and theologians, it is from them that he will get both his intellectual grasp and his intellectual modesty. Still further, no mistake could be greater than to suppose that devotion to professional studies is what makes dull, metaphysical or essay-writing preachers.

The simple fact is that the great preachers of the Christian Church have been its great theologians. Augustine, Anselm, Bernard, Luther, Calvin, Schleiermacher, Maurice, Chalmers, Newman, Channing — these men at the same time revived the preaching of the Church and remoulded its theology. The one function did not exclude the other. On the contrary ample learning permitted simplicity of speech. It is so with every preacher. He must have a background, not of sentimentalism or poetry, or of the affairs of the day, but of well-ordered knowledge concerning the proper themes of his calling, and if he has not habitually addressed his mind to these themes, then he may sentimentalize or entertain or discuss as he will, but he will not for any length of time mislead a community into the belief that he has a right to stand before them as the interpreter of the ways of a living God. "Behold!" says many a minister, like the fishermen of Galilee, "We have toiled all night and taken nothing;" and then the answer comes, "Launch out into the *deep*, and let down your nets for a draught." It is this dabbling in the shallow places of one's professional life which ruins the career of so many fishers of men. It is for him who obeys the summons to the deeper waters of his vocation that the net immediately is filled.

I pass to higher ways than this of study through which a Church shall satisfy the thirst for a living God; — and I choose out of them all this quality alike for minister and people, — a larger loyalty to the spirit of Jesus Christ. We hear it said that a live faith will outgrow the Christian limitations, and that a mediator between the soul and God is an interruption of communion. But in reality the discipleship of Christ exists for no other thing than to make this communion uninterrupted, and there is no other way of communion so straight and clear. "Show us the *Father*," said the disciple, "and it sufficeth us;" and the

answer was : " He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." A man, that is to say, who has lived in intimacy with Jesus Christ is not likely to look in vain for a Father in heaven. His Christian loyalty deepens and clarifies his Theism. It is in the companionship with Jesus Christ that one comes to know God best as a living God. A great many problems may remain open concerning the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, but this at least is sure, — that he had a wonderful sense of the nearness and reality of God. When a man is looking for other truths he may perhaps go elsewhere, but when his soul is thirsting for a living God, then certainly what Jesus said is true, " The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." This is the natural basis of the authority of Jesus. To come in the course of one's experience upon one towering personality to whom the sense of God is meat and drink, and in whom duty becomes grace through this illuminating of his way, to be taken out of one's solitude and feel this life touching one's own through all its experiences, yet sustained and disciplined throughout by this transfiguring faith, — that is a recognition of authority which is healthful and scientific and invigorating and humbling all at once. The more one is set free from false and external authority the more he needs the authority of a master soul. The more the problem of the time is seen to be the preaching of a living God, the more unlikely shall we be to outgrow the mediating force of Christian loyalty. Far more probably will come the cry which the American representative of Spencerian philosophy already foresees, when " the kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of Christ and he shall reign, King of kings and Lord of lords."

There remains but one other way which I need mention in which a Church can meet this thirst of the time ; one other weapon with which this battle of the age is to be

fought. Yet it is the weapon without which all that I have named will be in vain. Serious studies, Christian faith, — these are but contributions to the one possession which can make religion reach the souls that need it. I need not say that it is what the Apostle calls “the sword of the Spirit,” the possession of a consecrated character, the eloquence of the life that is lived with God. After all, only one thing can make people sure that there is a living God and that is his effect on living souls. After all, there is but one kind of Church which can truly slake the thirst of the time, and that is a Church which develops and sustains holy lives. There is but one proof of life; it is life itself. When we see a soul manifestly sustained of God, then we are sure that God lives. Thus the secret of the power and success of any Church lies, not in the eloquence of its preacher or the elaboration of its ritual, but simply in the unconscious manifestation by each individual among its congregation of the reality of the life of God. This is the ministry which all may share and the responsibility which none can avoid. This is what makes a Church a power of salvation for souls, — that there is found in it, amid the restlessness, depressions, and perplexities of the time, the calmness of a stable faith. This, then, becomes the deepest prayer which can be offered for a Christian Church, — that even as the cry with which men come to it must be that cry with which our psalm begins, “My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God,” so the word with which they depart may be the song of trust with which the psalm concludes; “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.”

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THE INTERPRETATION OF LIFE.

BY

REV. CHARLES E. ST. JOHN.



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The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Individuals desiring to co-operate with this Association may receive a certificate of Associate Membership by signing an application card (sent on request to the Associate Department) and the payment of one dollar. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

FORM OF BEQUEST

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars, the principal to be securely invested and the income to be used to promote the work of the Association.

MAR 1 2 1917

THE INTERPRETATION OF LIFE.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." — MATT. xvi. 24.

WE are immortal beings, — beings compacted of the germs of all excellence. Each human being is a power, more or less conscious of itself, tending toward the things that are absolutely right. In every soul exists the power of being honorable, faithful, patient, pure in heart; the power of loving, of making sacrifices for the sake of love and righteousness, and especially the power of independent exertion of will. The beginning of the realization of everything that has ever inspired our race lives in these immortal souls of ours. We accept to the full everything that the men of science have established, or may in the future establish, concerning the origin of our souls. We gladly recognize that we are born out of the bosom of this good old earth and its experiences. But notwithstanding all these teachings that may be given us, and reaching far beyond anything that is implied in them, there rises this magnificent perception, which is given to every one of us, that we are immortal beings, conditioned under God to work for the things of God, to take them into our souls as our own and our very self, to guide us from this day on forever more.

Each one, consciously or unconsciously, is already a power of the immortal life. And the deepest thing that is in us, inspiring the exertion of that power of the immortal life, is a great yearning to express these qualities

which we dimly know are within us. We desire to put forth the power that we have, and thereby gain more power out of the great realms of God, which in turn we may put forth for the blessing of our brothers and the laying of the earthly foundations of the kingdom of God. We desire, each and every one of us, to express ourselves, our natures, our whole being. We desire in that self-expression and by that self-expression to bring ourselves into contact with God, so that we shall know day by day more and more about God, and so make him the greatest and nearest reality of all our experience. We desire with this great and wonderful longing to find satisfaction in living, so as to be glad that we are alive day by day, moment by moment, in that we are able in some way to express ourselves, and by the very joy of that expression to come to the consciousness that we have that in us which is worth expressing.

Yet behold the conditions which we find confronting us. Inspired as we are by such magnificent yearnings, such splendid ideals and hopes, we find ourselves faced by a world which seems to be dominated by hardship, by perplexity, by disappointment, by loss, by sorrow, by things that crush our souls. It often seems as if the harder we tried to express that which is best in us the more forcibly we come up against those barriers, shall I call them? Whatever they are, we group them under the name of life's discipline. Whoso is bravest seems to have the most to contend against. Whosoever is patient and innocent in his living seems to have the most of affliction turned upon his life.

How are we to interpret this relation between our eager spirits and the world in which we are compelled to live? Grant again everything that the man of science claims under the name of evolution; grant that the experience of our race and of the creatures from which we descended

have brought forth these relations which exist between us and between ourselves and nature. Still, we do not interpret those hard conditions and our relation to them by going back to the beginnings. You cannot interpret anything human by searching out the origin of all things human. The only way to interpret our life is to study our own souls as they are now, conscious of their immortality, conscious of their nearness to the life of God. Let us study human souls and see what is the effect upon them of these conditions of living which are called the disciplines of life. Many interpretations are offered.

There are those who tell us that these hard things in life are dark shadows coming between the light and the creatures of God that cannot live without light. They tell us that these dread things of life are to be likened to a vast swarm of repulsive vultures gathering around that which is about to die. They tell us that these trials are something to be battled with, that they are foes of our finer being, that they are the instrumentalities of the great enemy of God. They even dare to tell us that these things display the wrath of God. So they interpret life as a hedged-in thing, and tell us that our restless spirits are simply chafing under conditions which offer nothing but opposition to everything that is best in the human soul. So they call us to arms whenever they ask us to serve God and humanity, and urge us to come out and fight, — fight our enemies, beat down the things that obstruct our progress.

How easy it is to respond to that great appeal! The challenge to arms moves every strong nature; and when we answer it, and take the world that we live in as a hostile thing, feeling that we are indeed given over by God into the hands of Satan for some mysterious reason ever unknown to us, then how easy it is for us to imagine that, whatever we do, God is on our side, and not on the other

side! How easy it is, under that law of living, to imagine that we are following our fine ambition to express our being, when we are simply asserting ourselves in a way that is not noble, but chiefly animated by the desire to win, to put down something, to overcome some force or party, some army or nation that may be opposed to our own! It seems to me that this interpretation of life is deficient in the fundamental principle of Christian living, that of self-denial. A certain type of self-sacrifice appears in the life of the soldier who is the representative of this interpretation of life. Where wars have led men to strive against men with the great ambition of winning victories, there have been many things given up, even life itself. There men have displayed courage, which in the pages of romance and reality alike always inspires us. Yet back of that note of triumph which comes to us out of the military life there lies the great, underlying, mournful wail of them that suffer wrong, of them that are beaten down with sorrows that need not have been. So we learn that that kind of self-sacrifice is a self-sacrifice which gets so overwhelmed with the vision of glory as to forget the consequences of rushing onward after glory, as to forget the sorrows, the afflictions, and the sins that have ever followed in the trail of the simple militant life. No, let us seek another interpretation of this life of ours.

There are other people who hold to the opinion that our life is a completed thing, that in the present there is little that is great, that whosoever would come into contact with human greatness, with beautiful living, must go back into the dim past, where men have indeed wrought wondrously well. They devote themselves to the purely studious life, knowing, as is very true, that the record of a thousand years of human experience can show very much more of glory and completeness and beauty than can the record laid before us in any one day by the newspapers.

So they say this time of ours does not produce those beautiful things that shine out of the records of a thousand years. They say that whosoever would find ideals of righteousness, whosoever would find human strength, the ability and the power of putting forth the things that are great, must go back into the past and see what men have done. When the ardent souls of the present, active world come to these people who know the goodness of the past, and tell them with brave, young emotion what they mean to do for the uplifting of the world, these who think that life is completed always reply, "That has been tried, my young friend; that has been tried." Everything that you propose to these people "has been tried." And the restless spirit, overcome by the perception of the reality of life so as for a moment to overlook the natural reverence for human experience, can but reply, "Yes, tried by *you*; but *I* have not tried these ways, and *I* propose to try them." Why, it is given to every one who will deeply and nobly understand the possibilities of his being to know that it is not the success of effort that is the chief thing, but the effort itself. Through ages on ages men have tried to do beautiful things; and men for ages and ages to come will patiently and bravely and ignorantly, if you will, go on trying to do these same things, unconsciously aware that it is the trying that brings out human life.

It is the endeavor that makes us be what we can be; and, compared with the endeavor, all the results are as nothing. Heaven lies out there before us; but it is the effort to get there that means something to strong souls, not the living therein. Whosoever found himself in heaven, free from responsibility, free from all difficulty, could do nothing but follow the example of the Master as it is outlined in that fable of ancient Rome. Peter, discouraged by the great difficulty of the task in which

he was engaged, had deserted the cause, and was fleeing from that wicked city, when he met the mysterious figure of his Master, and asked him, "Whither goest thou, Lord?" And his Master answered, "To Rome." Of course, what could the Master do but turn his back on heaven, and go to the place where the stress of life is most serious? Where can any man, if he desires to express himself in works that shall be of use to the world, find a possibility of expressing himself other than under conditions which are hard? No, life is not a completed thing. Adam and Eve, to turn to another old fable and find a hidden truth in it, — Adam and Eve, created mature and happy, must of necessity prove to be moral weaklings. Not until the flaming sword blazed between them and their paradise did they begin to do anything for this race or for God.

There is hinted the true interpretation of life, — an interpretation which recognizes this existence of ours as one of responsible progress. These hard things that come down upon us so overwhelmingly are not to be taken as something to be fought against, but as something to be used by souls that know how to employ material that is given to them, used in the cause of all righteousness, used in the putting forth of the power that is in us. Shaped though they may be by human experience, and elaborated before that by the natural processes of evolution, still what they say to us from the great mind of God is, "Here, child of mine, is at last a chance for you to be something stronger and finer than you have ever been before." When the sorrows of my life come down upon me, I may in my human ignorance of the future pray that the cup may pass from my lips; but, when that cup actually touches my lips, then I have a chance to be patient, earnest, consecrated unto all good things such as I never had before.

How *could* any human soul grow in the power of patience, taking up this germ that is in him by the love of God and making it grow day by day to be larger than it is, — how could he possibly do it unless he had something that required patience of him? How could we by any possibility put forth into this world the splendid influence of purity of heart, unless there were continually confronting us possibilities of being something other than pure in heart? Take any noble quality of our lives, and apply to it that test. You will find that every hardship that comes to any human soul, howsoever excessive the hardship may be, gives him the chance so to use it as to become a better soul than he has been before. He may not be glad that it has come. It may not add to the happiness of his life. Of two men, one of them innocently and jubilantly happy day by day and the other one commanded by a certain fine public spirit and a disciplined self-control under his vision of the things that are, — of these two, which one is worth more to you and to this world and to God? Not the merely happy man ever. Yet I have seen enough of life to dare to believe that, whensoever any human soul takes hold of his life in the spirit of the soldier who goes forth to serve and not simply to fight, and acts constantly by the great purpose of building the kingdom of God and his righteousness, — invariably unto that man there are added certain lesser sweet things of life, — contentment, happiness, or something else which satisfies him just as well.

So in the case of these sorrows, difficulties, afflictions, which we call discipline: it is given to us to put forth our simple human will. It is given to every man to say, —

“It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll;
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.”

Oh, it is wondrously true that "the path of duty is the way to glory;" wondrously true that all glory, which can permanently satisfy those who deserve it, all glory which can be laid before God as a tribute to him, is won by those who follow the path of duty, and understand that the path of duty is the daily, patient, splendid dealing with those things that are monotonous and difficult in our several lives. God asks us to be good; and here all around us, like flowers in our way, he scatters opportunities to be good, and to do something that is helpful, something that is patient, something that is pure. He asks us that we follow the Master in the great demonstration of the law of self-sacrifice; and here by our way there are opportunities for us to do that thing, and nothing to prevent us from doing it save the weakness that exists in our souls. The true interpretation of life is one that will help men to see that the hardships of life, the sorrows and the pains of life, are a throne unto which we are all born by virtue of our being heirs of God. It is a throne of power, and whosoever lightly or timidly abdicates that throne does a weak and shameful deed.

We are told by those who do not interpret life on this basis that the picture which is called "The Man with the Hoe" displays the hard and oppressive limitations under which those that toil must ever live. Now far be it from me to say a word which would seem to indicate a lack of sympathy for those who are obliged to toil under circumstances more oppressive than those which I myself have to meet. I venture to claim that I know something about the harder and more oppressive conditions of life; but because I know these things, and because I have seen human souls dealing with them magnificently, I dare to interpret the most difficult lives by saying, you must round out the picture of "The Man with the Hoe" with another picture of the same artist, "The Angelus," and

recognize that at any moment the man with the hoe can find the true meaning of what he is about by lifting up his spirit unto God. At any moment any human being, engaged in whatsoever trials and difficulties and limitations, can take hold of those things, and so deal with them as to wrest all moral possibilities from them, and to rise in majesty before those who observe, and reveal the glory of spiritual living, — gain, in short, the only thing for which an immortal life is given.

Go on doing all that you can for all those who are troubled and oppressed, but do not so belittle their immortal souls as to imagine that you have to change the conditions of their lives before they can find noble expression of what is loveliest in human nature. We all have our chance, and therefore we ought all of us to be glad that we are alive. We ought all of us to go on from the footing where we now stand, and put forth the qualities that are within us by means of the opportunities which God has given us, understanding, through this Christian interpretation of life, that our difficulties are divine opportunities, and not limitations set up by Satan.

The great symbol of the cross of Christ expresses this side of life. Do not think that the cross was a limitation upon the life of Jesus. The cross was to him what these crosses of ours are to us, — his moral opportunity. In the presence of that opportunity, what did he not do for this world of ours! Set forth the cross still as the symbol of the opportunities of life, but say that the life of Christ itself is the symbol of our immortal life. The cross that he bore is but the symbol of the crosses that we bear, — simply the symbol to show us that in the hardships of life appear man's grandest open doors. If life is not hard for anybody, his first duty under God is to go out and find something that is hard. There is no other way to get that cross upon one's shoulder than to go out and find

something that is hard. These hopes for easy living, these unappreciative words about a heaven that shall give rest everlasting, — how wide they are from the mark that is set for us by the cross of our Master!

Life, then, is not a battle. Put it the other way, and it will be true: battle is a life. Battle of all kinds gives us the chance to live, the chance to be men and women, the chance to be heroic, the chance to be divine. Life appeals to us still for the soldierly spirit. But instead of that old-time inspiration which comes to us from the clanking accoutrements of war, instead of that inward exaltation in us which military music calls out, we are coming at last to feel the leadership of Christ, and to see so clearly and so happily the thrilling ideals of the loftiest life that come down to us from God through our teacher as to find in them the same power of appeal that has been given to the soldier of the olden days by the mere call to arms. It is given to us to turn upon these perils of our daily lives instead of fleeing from them when we can; to turn upon them and take them as the opportunities of our lives in such a fashion that we shall be able to make the books and the tools we use flash continually as with the gleaming of the sword; able to give to the ordinary incidents of our lives the insistence of musketry, and all the power and dignity and lift that romance has thrown into the marching of armies of men and the contending of men on desperate fields of battle.

Action, then, is the keynote of this interpretation of our lives. Being immortal is always better than winning immortality. Building heaven here upon earth is of necessity better for us now than any thought of heaven that is to come, though our hearts are filled with the conviction that an immortal progress lies before us all.

Now, it is given to our church, to all churches of the Christian name, — and I dare say to many other churches

that do not take the Christian name, — it is given to us to stand upon these massive foundations of faith and interpret to our land the life that human souls must live. It is given to us to go out and interpret unto a nation that nation's grief, — the greatest work that has ever been undertaken by man. Statesmen may interpret unto their nations the relations between land and land. The teachers whom we honor may interpret unto us the true laws of human society. But the greatest work to which the mind can turn is to go out and interpret unto human souls the griefs that come upon them, to go out and interpret to a nation the underlying divine purposes that are to be found in everything that is sad, in every affliction, in every crime, to see the larger meaning of the hero's death, to go out and show our nation, comrades, — you and I, — to go out and show our nation that by virtue of the underlying justice of God our revered President has done more for us, more for the progress of righteousness in this world, more for the setting forth of all things that were dear to his heart, by dying with the simple Christian courage that he showed than he possibly could have done by living among us many more years. Whosoever can see these things can teach the whole world to possess their spirits in magnificent patience in recognition of the unfailing law of God, by which we are all always, under all circumstances, controlled. He knows the deeps of life who can interpret unto the land how God, in his infinite wisdom, can take up even the blind wickedness of a fool and make that a part of the growth of righteousness in a nation.

Whosoever is able to interpret such things and keep hold of the hand of the present God through all national difficulties, and all personal ones, he is the man and that is the church that in the years that are to come are going to make Christianity the power over reasonable minds

that it is surely destined to be. Oh, the joy of it! to be able to make men glad that they are alive, and, though the whole land be swarming with iniquity, to make people see the beauty of the beautiful life and the possibility of making life beautiful in every corner of every city in the world! to be able to go out and show to men that here and now we are living in a golden age! There never will be, there never was, *the* golden age. We are living in that which is golden, and that is enough for our satisfaction; for it appeals unto everything that is in us. It draws out all the powers that we have just so fast as they spring up in our being. O Church of God, come ye up to these mountain tops, these peaks of the glory of interpreting life deeply and well! Take these things of faith, — faith in God, faith in your own souls, faith in other souls, faith in the interminable future, — take these splendid things of faith and go out and interpret them to human souls wheresoever you find any one who does not know that life is a glorious thing.

Give to us for this work, fathers and mothers, your finest youth. Oh, to think of the fathers and mothers that have turned aside brave, young minds that were inclined to go into this ministry of the interpretation of life, turned them aside from that highest of all things human, and asked them to do works that are less potent! Give to us, not the boys and girls that cannot do anything else, but the finest youth of your homes, and we will give them work to do that will strain every nerve in them, and enable them to put forth power upon power, of which they may never dream if they go into any other life.

There lies before the Church of God in this world of ours a destiny compared with which all the glories of the past shall be forgotten. For never, in completeness, in patience, in great breadth of action, has this Christian

interpretation of life been given unto man. Here and there in the past we find a man who has been both a hero and a wise soul, and has put forth his activities on such a basis; but the Christian Church as a whole has never even dimly understood the possibility of doing it. When at last the Christian Church does range up to the level of the life of its Master, then it will produce results which will prove how much better than any other sphere for human activity is that offered by the privilege of interpreting life so as to make men glad that they have a chance of grappling with the things that are hard. When that generous gladness comes, then the man who has been moaning because he is downtrodden wakes up and sees at last that in the fact that he is downtrodden he has a challenge from God which enables him to bring out splendid things in his soul. Rightly proclaimed, this interpretation inspires him to forget his poor oppressor in the splendid joy of the things he is accomplishing by God's grace through the foolishness of the oppressor.

We have got to revolutionize our modern methods of charity. We have got to revolutionize our preaching. We have got to get a new comprehension of the possibilities of Christianity. We are to go forth under the banner of our leader, doing these things. There are many others who are doing it, God be praised! but we are freer in some ways to enter upon this service. Why is it that we are not all on fire, every one who calls himself a Unitarian, on fire with the splendid example that is always set before us by our Master bearing his cross? How is it that each and every one of us, preachers and laity alike, are not eagerly grasping for our cross, in order to go out and follow the Master, and live so gloriously well as to make not only ourselves happy, but to give happiness to many others day by day? It is only the bearing of the cross that will accomplish this. It is only toil that permits

high self-expression. It is only they that are pioneers in advancing the interests of humanity that are in the best possible way able to interpret by their actions this glorious human life ; and, if we interpret it according to our strength and vision, we can lead the army of those who live thus nobly.

It is your privilege and mine thus to take a manful part in these coming grander days of an enlightened and invigorated Christianity. If we will interpret life according to our vision, and live according to our inner strength, making both speech and action proclaim the glory of the doing of duty, we shall render unto God an acceptable sacrifice, and unto men an inspiring service.

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THE DIVINITY OF JESUS.

BY

REV. ALEXANDER T. BOWSER.



PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

APR 1 2 1917

THE DIVINITY OF JESUS.

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, who was the brightness of his glory, and the **e**xpress image of his person.” — HEBREWS i. 1-3.

Two radically different views of the nature and character of Jesus are found running all through the history of the Christian Church. One may be called the supernatural, and the other the natural view of his divinity. The supernatural view is that held by Trinitarians, and the natural view by Unitarians. But can Unitarians rightly say that Jesus was divine, when they do not believe that he was God? Yes; because the word “divine” is an adjective expressing godlike qualities, and there are degrees of divinity as of other qualities. Thus we speak of an action as divine in its character, or of a thing as having divine beauty. Or we may say that there is more divinity in goodness than in power; the work of a missionary more divine than that of a soldier. But we cannot qualify the nature of the Deity. God is absolute in wisdom, power, love, knowledge. It is well, however, to remember that when Trinitarians say they believe Jesus was divine, they usually mean that he was God in the absolute sense; but when Unitarians speak of his divinity, they mean that he was godlike in life and character, that he manifested divine qualities under human limitations. And this use of the word is perfectly right, and should lead to no confusion of thought regarding the nature and mission of Jesus. When we perceive the presence of God in the outward

world — in its beauty, bounty, harmony — we correctly say that nature is divine; and no one supposes that we are confusing nature with God. Moreover, if we see godlike qualities in the character and teaching of Jesus, we may think and speak of him as divine, without identifying him with the Deity in any unique or special sense whatever.

We have no evidence that the Christian Church held any particular theory regarding the divinity of Jesus during the first two hundred years of its history. But in the third century discussions about his supernatural origin began to appear; and in the year 325 the great Council at Nicea was held to determine the true doctrine. Then from that date on, for several hundred years, controversies concerning the nature of the Christ fill an important place in nearly every chapter of Church history. These discussions had no reference whatever to the practical life and teaching of the Master; they referred only to what he was in the mysterious depths of being. Not what his friends and disciples thought about him while he was still among them, nor how he became conscious of his filial relation to God, and was able to impart his convictions to his followers, leading them to believe that they too were the sons and daughters of the same God whom he called Father; but what constituted him the Supreme Being in human form was the object of every debate, the end of all controversy. And then, whatever the majority decided to be the true doctrine was put into the creed; and this creed the people must accept as the confession of the Church, or be condemned as heretics. And to be a heretic in those days meant to be an outlaw, with no standing in Church or State. In this way the followers of Sabellius were condemned for teaching that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were three different

forms of the same Being; and the Arians, because they believed that Jesus was not the same in substance with God, but was created by God of a similar substance; and others, for doubting that he had two distinct natures, the human and the divine; and still others because they thought he had only one will. Then, when all the various heresies had been condemned, one after another, the opinions of the majority were summed up in what is called the Athanasian Creed, in which the Christ is declared to be coeternal and coequal with God. This creed, however, was not written by Athanasius himself, as is generally supposed, but by some unknown person hundreds of years afterwards. In his history of the Eastern Church, Dean Stanley speaks of it as a "hymn," and says that "it is of French or Spanish origin."

The supernatural view of the divinity of Christ maintains that the great Teacher of Galilee, who lived as a man among men, was tempted as they were, prayed as a man prays, struggled to bring his will into harmony with the divine will, even as men of God have striven in all ages and lands, and then at last died the shameful death of the cross,—this view ascribes to this man of Nazareth all the attributes of Deity; that he was the infinite and eternal Being, above all things, beneath all things, within all things, the Creator, Sustainer, and Guide of the whole vast universe of life and thought and activity. This theory of his nature asserts that he was Divine because of his miraculous birth and supernatural power, because he gave his life a sacrifice for sin and then rose from the dead on the third day, because in some strange and unexplained manner the Divine and the human were so united in him that as God he became man in order to suffer and die for the sins of the world.

Though in brief outline, I think that this is a fair

presentation of the Trinitarian view of the divinity of Christ. Moreover, to deny this doctrine is not simply regarded as heresy ; it is considered disloyalty to Jesus, and infidelity to his religion ; while to accept and believe it is the only means of obtaining everlasting salvation.

But, to my mind, to think of Jesus as Deity destroys the noblest example of manhood the world has ever known, without adding anything to the idea of God as plainly taught in the Gospel. It takes away our human Teacher, and puts in his place a mysterious being who is neither God nor man, but sometimes the one and sometimes the other. Indeed, this is my chief objection to the doctrine of the Trinity: it obscures and mystifies that simple and beautiful life of heroic self-sacrifice and devotion to duty ; and in the place of our brother man,—to whom the Spirit was given without measure, full of grace and truth, and in whose character we see the brightness of the divine glory, an image of the divine personality,—it gives us a God disguised as a man, who is acting a part in the great drama of redemption, and not living the real life of a human soul at all.

If Jesus was the infinite and eternal God, his perfect self-sacrifice and sublime devotion to duty are not the human love and consecration to which we may aspire ; his courage and constancy in the face of all opposition and his manly struggle against temptation have no meaning to one who is buffeted and bewildered by the storms of life, and beset on every side with the allurements of evil. In our experience his “blessed are the pure in heart” and his command to be “perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect” become downright mockery, if he was pure in heart and godlike in character himself, not because of natural human attainments, but through the miracle of a supernatural birth. In times of weakness

when harassed by temptation, overcome by evil, crushed by disappointment and sorrow, how can it help us human beings to think that he as God overcame the power of sin, and in every trial remained faithful and true? But when we look upon his constant fidelity to his convictions and his resolute submission to the divine will, notwithstanding the seeming defeat of his Gospel and the failure of his mission, and remember that in all things (as the apostle says) "he was made like unto his brethren," and yet never yielded to doubt or fear, nor fell into any sin, it strengthens the fainting heart, renews our courage and inspires us with fresh hope in the possibilities of our own nature, helping us to meet temptation and endure hardships in his spirit of unshrinking manliness and far-reaching faith. When we think of Jesus as God, he ceases to be an example to us; but when we look upon him as the New Testament writers describe him — "a man approved of God" — a man "made perfect through sufferings" — his whole life becomes radiant with divine beauty, his path of self-sacrifice the way to heaven, his truth the power of God to free the soul and fill it with the inspiration of faith and hope.

This is the natural view of the divinity of Jesus. It does not seek to explain the metaphysical question of the relation of the human with the divine in his soul, nor does it attempt to prove that he was or was not God; but teaches that he was divine — that is, godlike — because in his life and teaching we find a manifestation of those qualities which we believe to be attributes of God. The highest ideas of God taught by religion or philosophy have always represented goodness as belonging to the character of Deity; and the most perfect goodness the world has any history of was enacted in the life of Jesus. Prophets and preachers of righteousness have ever proclaimed the

protecting care of God; but the thought of Jesus soared higher than all others, revealed a heart of Infinite Love as the centre of life, and taught the world to call it "Our Father."

This natural and rational view of the character of Jesus shows how he became the Son of God and one with the Father by his life of filial obedience to the divine voice in his soul, and by entire submission to the divine will as he discerned it in his daily experience. Through constant communion with the Divine Spirit he became conscious that he was in the Father and the Father in him. Thus he became a revelation of God, unveiling the divine fatherhood by his human teaching and human living. As, when gazing into a clear lake at mid-day, we see not the water itself, but an image of the heavens pictured in its peaceful stillness, so, looking into the pure soul of Jesus, we behold in its spiritual depths, not the man of Nazareth, but the Over-Soul in which "we live and move and have our being," and learn the meaning of that word to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The more we study the life and teaching of Jesus the more plainly do we see his simple humanity. But it was humanity filled with the inspiration of God, though in a way that left him still a human being, the highest ideal of what a man may become who yields his powers of heart and mind to the influence of the indwelling Spirit. So entirely oblivious were the writers of the New Testament to any essential difference between the nature of Jesus and the nature of his disciples and friends that, everywhere throughout the book, the Master and his followers are equally regarded as "the offspring of God," "partakers of the divine nature." If Jesus is called the Son of God, St. John writes of all Christians, "Now are we the sons of God;" and St. Paul also declares that "As

many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." It was this same apostle who, beholding the beauty and truth and goodness of the Christ, with admiration and reverence exclaimed, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." We wonder at such an expression, and can hardly believe that its author could have used it of a man — a mere human being. And yet when we turn to his Epistle to the Ephesians, we find him praying that his fellow-Christians "might be filled with all the fulness of God."

Thus we could go through the New Testament and, whatever terms are used to express the nature and character of Jesus, we find the same terms used in reference to his disciples. For instance, we read that he was without sin; and this is thought to be a strong argument against his being strictly human. But the apostle takes it for granted that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin," — meaning, doubtless, that whenever a man becomes conscious of his filial relation to God, his whole nature is so dignified by the conviction that, like the Christ, he will live a pure and true life. Furthermore, Jesus is called the Light of the world, though not in any peculiar sense; for we hear his own voice announcing to a crowd of common people gathered on a grassy hill in Palestine that they also were the light of the world. The Church regards Jesus as the Saviour of men, and so he is, since love for him and faith in his truth will lift the soul above all sin and doubt and fear, and bring God near to the heart as our personal Friend and Helper. But if he were sent to earth to become its Saviour in a supernatural sense, he does not seem to know it himself; for he distinctly associates his disciples with him in this divine work, saying to them, "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

We see then that, according to the New Testament, Jesus, far from being identical with God, was not different from his brethren in any essential element of human nature. His divinity was a natural quality of the soul, and not a supernatural power with which he was endowed through the miracle of incarnation. Either he was unqualifiedly human in his nature and attainments, or his friends and disciples were not human; for what he was they also were, or hoped to become. Nay, more, they always spoke of him as a man like themselves, except that he was more godlike than others — “having learned obedience by the things which he suffered.” They all believed themselves to be the sons and daughters of God, but regarded Jesus as the well-beloved Son, “who was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.” Nor did they make the mistake of confusing the image or likeness of God with God himself, and declare that this dear child whom they believed to be “the first born among many brethren” was coeternal and coequal with the Father. All such statements concerning the Christ were put into the creeds hundreds of years afterwards.

We believe, therefore, that Jesus was divine because he was godlike in character, and taught the world this way of living. He makes the goodness and love of God real to us by his own pure life — his self-sacrificing devotion to truth and duty, his love for God and man. When we read the story of the Gospel, study its precepts, and accept its principles as our rule of life, a new light shines into the mind by which God is seen to be our Father, heaven near by, and life full of divine love and goodness.

Thus we come to see the true divinity of Jesus in the fact that he reveals God to our hearts, and helps us to

live as he himself lived, with one hand in the hand of God, and the other extended in help to God's needy children.

This, then, is the way that Unitarians believe in the divinity of Jesus. And we think our faith reasonable and inspiring, and also in harmony with the spirit of the New Testament. Instead of confusing the mind and chilling the heart with the philosophic statements of the creeds, we go direct to the Gospel itself, and there we touch hands with the Christ as our brother and friend; and, through him, are led as by an open door into the very presence of God, and know him to be the universal Father.

Theodore Parker, who was the first Christian preacher in this country to insist on the perfect naturalness of the religion of Jesus, has expressed this view of his divinity in a hymn which is very dear to Unitarians as exactly voicing our allegiance to the Christ, whose name we bear, whose sway we own, whose love wells up in our hearts, and whose spirit goes forth in our lives for the healing and uplifting of the world:—

“O thou great Friend to all the sons of men,
Who once appeared in humblest guise below,
Sin to rebuke, to break the captive's chain,
And call thy brethren forth from want and woe!
We look to thee; thy truth is still the light
Which guides the nations, groping on their way,
Stumbling and falling in disastrous night,
Yet hoping ever for the perfect day.
Yes: thou art still the Life; thou art the Way
The holiest know, — Light, Life, and Way of heaven;
And they who dearest hope, and deepest pray,
Toil by the light, life, way, which thou hast given.”

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25 BEACON STREET BOSTON, MASS.

APR 12 1917

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

BY

REV. EDWARD EVERETT HALE, D.D.



PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

APR 1 9 1917

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

“What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he?”

MATTHEW xxii. 42.

THE first half of this text was selected by Father Ignatius for his discourse, when he preached in this pulpit three weeks since. With that curious indifference to historical accuracy which seems to stamp enthusiasts, he omitted the last half of the text, and made no illusion to the incident described. This was a pity. For, as he wanted to interest us in the real history of Jesus, it would have seemed natural to tell us why Jesus asked the question of the text on this occasion, when he never asked it of the same people on any other occasion. For the subject Father Ignatius was discussing, it is a very curious observation that the Saviour himself was so indifferent as to men's questions or thoughts about him. He once asked his apostles what the multitude thought about him. On this occasion he does not even speak of himself. He asks a general question as to the Messiah whom all expected. Whose son shall the Messiah be? Must he be David's son? “Whose son is he, — the son of David or the son of God?” For the rest he said squarely, “It is my Father who does

the works. It is the Holy Spirit who speaks the word. If any man blasphemes me, he may be forgiven." He even chides his disciples because they can do nothing without him. He sinks his own personality. As Paul says so well, "He makes himself of no reputation. He takes upon himself the form of a servant." You might say he is quite indifferent how men define his nature or his position if only they will follow him.

You might say he is absolutely indifferent to this question, "What think ye of Christ?" which we are now told is the most important question of all. If you read the four Gospels for the first time, and merely addressed yourself to the question of what he did think important, you would say at once that his whole heart and soul were put on bringing in the kingdom of God.

There is, as I said, one and only one central passage where he gave to us his own statement. Curiously enough, again, this passage is now coolly rejected by those who are most eager to extol his authority. When they were all driven out of Galilee, when they had taken refuge in a foreign dominion, he asked the twelve who they thought he was. Simon Peter promptly answered, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." Jesus praised him for the answer; he said he would build his Church on that answer,—that that answer should be sufficient for the foundation of the Church, and that on a

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

church so built hell would have no power. "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God."

How extraordinary it is, if Peter made the wrong reply, — as we are now told he did, — if Peter should have said, "Thou art the living God," as the creeds of the fifth century would have him say! How extraordinary that this central occasion should have been lost, nay, should have been worse than lost! How extraordinary that Peter should say Jesus was the son of God, if he were God himself! This failure can only be accounted for on the ground which our friend Dr. Huntington takes, the Bishop of Syracuse, when he says that Peter did not himself then know who the Saviour was, and only found out after the Saviour had died.

As to our text itself, it is only interesting in what I may almost call the dramatic sequence of events; because it illustrates the Saviour's steady determination to put down, even by ridicule, that Jewish prejudice which made out the children of Abraham to be the only people in the world worth thinking of. I have read the whole passage, as Father Ignatius did not, that you might see this determination of his, and how important it is that the two parts of this text shall be kept together. Here was this Jewish superstition, that when God chose to send his messenger, when the Christ should come, he must be of the line of David. The same superstition shows itself in those long genealogies

with which the Gospels of Matthew and of Luke begin, in which, by different lines, Christ's birth is traced back to David, to show that he fulfilled the Jewish condition. But the Saviour himself shows indifference to this tradition. When they say at once that the Christ must be the son of David, he says in reply, "Why, David calls him 'Lord.' David admits that he himself is inferior to any one who comes direct from God. And do you mean that David requires a genealogical descent from himself of one who is to be the King of kings, and Lord of lords?" The incident is only one of many on which he presses hard upon that provincialism of the Jews. "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." "The publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of heaven before you." Yes, the Gentiles, who are like beggars out in the highway, they shall be received at the feast when the children of Abraham are left out. Such are the parables and such the epigrams by which this local provincialism is rebuked. And what is offered on the other side? The grandeur of a true-born son of God. The light and life and glory and victory which will certainly come when a child of God partakes of the divine nature, as we all may, enters into the life of God, is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and works the miracles, therefore, which the Holy Spirit may command. There is one and another curious phrase, to show how broadly Jesus interprets this title of "son," and how much he

means by the central word "father." In another interview in this same temple, he quotes from the 82d Psalm the words in which those are called gods to whom the word of God came, — "Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods?" And then he puts squarely the question, which neither Father Ignatius nor any of his school ever condescends to answer, "If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), say ye of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the son of God?" If God is our father, we are all God's sons or God's daughters. And then, as the centre of expostulation and entreaty, he begs us to recognize the greatness of this calling, to be true to the spirit which inspires us, and as princes of the blood royal to live in the Father's house, and to go about the Father's business. Not unwilling to take the fond phrases, in which, with more or less distinctness, old prophets have spoken of the Messiah, he is willing to accept such terms as "First-born," "First-begotten," "Best beloved;" but always there is the determination that we shall understand that where there is a first-born son, there are other children, and that he opens for us the inheritance which he begs us all to claim.

What think ye of the Christ, then? The gospel answer to this question is, that the **Christ is the Son of God.**

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, is indeed the motto for the corner-stone of the church, as he said it was.

And any effort to make it out that more was concealed behind this phrase than it expresses, is an effort which re-acts against him who makes it. The Church herself stopped dead in her amazing advance of the early centuries. She failed in her real duty, and sunk back into an "establishment" just so soon as she began to worship him. Then it was that she turned away from the work which he assigned to her, which was to bring in the Kingdom of God.

"I am your master," he said. Yes. "You are to follow me, and I am your leader." Yes. "But you are to seek the Spirit of God to enliven you and give you strength. And, in fact, I go away that that Spirit may more surely possess you." Nay, his word is so strong as this, "If I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you."

So careful is he to efface himself from the worship of the church. He brings the wandering child to the Father's feet, and then goes away, that he may leave him there.

I. There are thirty different texts in which the Saviour more or less distinctly defines Christian discipleship. Such is the statement to Nicodemus, the earliest of them: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." I need not read them. It will be a better exercise

for you to copy them from your own Bibles yourselves. In those thirty texts he speaks three times of their believing on him. In all of them he speaks as to those who love him enough to believe him and to follow him. But in not one of them does he lay the least stress on any intellectual process. In not one of them does he open the question as to what they think of him, or what honor they shall pay to him. He offered himself as our Master, and left us his unfinished work. He says to us, "If you obey me, you will follow me." He proved his affection in his death. And he says, "If you believe in me, you will love me." He means that we shall unite in such love, and he says: "If you love me, you will love each other." In all these statements he speaks as one who would bring in the Kingdom of the Living God. Of himself he says almost nothing. But when he does speak, it is to say that he represents that Living God as his anointed and well-beloved Son.

II. When you come, in the Testament, to the apostles' definition of Christianity you find the same statement. They are building on the foundation. The foundation is: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." They are never tempted, right hand or left hand, to make any other statement. They baptize into the name of Jesus the Christ, Jesus the Saviour. They make no pretence that this Jesus is very God of

very God. Their one central thought is the building up a church of God's children; of the sons of God and of his daughters.

To these sons and daughters they say, "Here is God, God is near: enter his Kingdom." To bind them together, they baptize them in the name of Jesus Christ, the first begotten of their company, the best beloved Son of God, who has called them from darkness into light. And they call upon each and all to receive, as he received, the present Spirit of God, to live in that Spirit, to walk in that Spirit, to go and to come as themselves, God's children. "Walk worthy of the *calling* with which ye are called," as that Son of God walked, who died that you might come into your Father's home, and he into yours.

III. What the church thought of Christ, in the first centuries after the apostles, has appeared very distinctly in late years, in the discovery of the early Catechism, to which the name of the twelve apostles was given. It was the Catechism taught to new converts before they received the supper. Its language at the supper, for instance, shows that that was then a simple service of thanksgiving: —

"Concerning the Eucharist, thus give thanks; first concerning the cup: We thank thee, our Father, for the holy wine of David thy servant, which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant; to thee be the glory forever. And

concerning the broken bread : We thank thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant ; to thee be the glory forever." All worship, all prayers, are addressed to the Father. Jesus is his servant, whom he has sent as a teacher. He is as he was in Peter's word, " The son of the living God." It is on this rock that the church of that day knew that it was standing.

And so long as they sought what he sought, — to bring in the Kingdom of God, — the church triumphed, with a sway which no philosophy understood, and which no martyrdom set backward. But then, alas ! that came which he foresaw. Ah ! it is so much easier to worship him than to follow him. " Many will say ' Lord, Lord,' who do not the things that I say." While the church was willing to do the things he said, though it was the communion of the poor and the ignorant, of the weak and foolish, it triumphed. In those days it had no name for him other than his own, none but the anointed of God, brother of our brotherhood, first heir of inheritance, Son of God, well beloved, first-born, Master, and Lord. But it was not so easy to do as one would be done by ; it was not so easy to feed the poor and to welcome the leper ; it was not so easy to live in the brotherhood of humanity. It was a great deal easier to fall down and worship him, as he had never asked them to do ; vastly easier to call him very God of

very God, as he never said he was; easier to say he made the worlds, as he did not. Weary of that harder service, weary of the way of thorns, the church made its compact with the world. And from that day to this day, its formal creeds have thrown upon him the burden of the sins of mankind, and have given to him the homage which he gave to his Father.

IV. Yet he was never left without a witness. Central in all testimonies were the four Gospels, which would not change. Steadily they say that he is the Anointed—the Son of the living God. There was the confessed refusal of all Palestine, where he lived and died, to give him any other name, whether men were his followers or no. There were such simple Christians as those in the valleys of the Alps, who would never say that the Son was the Father, and did not know what was meant when men said it.

More and more, as Galileo's tube opened the sky, as this world took its proper little place in the universe, as it showed itself, a little speck of dust floating in space, by the same law which ruled planets, suns, and constellations; more and more did men ask themselves what the creed of the church meant when it said that Jesus of Nazareth made all the worlds; or what it meant when it said that the very God of the universe even, left the universe to stand on the deck of a fishing-boat at Capernaum. More and more the

devout thought of the world went back to the simple statement of the four Gospels, and recognized and found its Saviour, as never before, when it accepted him again as the well-beloved Son of the Living God, commissioned and anointed to bring in the Kingdom of God.

This is the statement of his work and his position which will stand, because it is his own statement. For us, our place is gratitude and loyalty. "What is that to thee?" he said to Peter once, when Peter stepped too far in a question, — "what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

And that is what he would say to us if we could put to him some of our speculative questions, — these conundrums which the theologians hand about so glibly, — "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Whoever will take the Saviour of men, in his work of saving them from their sins, whoever will try the great experiment of prayer, and the other experiment of sacrifice, as this Leader of men bids him try one and the other, comes to the certainty that here is a Leader who knows how to lead, who knows what he is talking about, and who shows the way. Whoever follows, though with trembling foot and fickle faith, follows each day more hopefully and strongly, and knows that this is no finite guess that he is working on; he knows that he has God's law for the affairs of men; this time he is sure of his Leader. This Leader is from God, commissioned

by him, inspired by him, and sustained by him. He who follows that Leader, comes to believe that Leader, and to live in his Life. As the Saviour prays, he prays. As the Saviour trusts, he trusts. As the Saviour listens, he listens. He comes to know that the living God, the living Power of the Universe, loves and strengthens every child of earth. They are his children, partakers of his nature, and alive with his life. Such a child of God, who has followed to such purpose the Son of God well-beloved, dares the great experiment of the Holy Spirit. He lives in God, he moves in God, in God he has his being. He plunges into life, knowing that the living God will sustain him and carry him through. He believes the Master's words, "Lo, I am not alone, for my Father is with me."

"God does not hate me. He loves me." This is the cry of such a disciple. "God does not punish me. He forgives me. God does not forget me as he goes about in his universe. He is here—to-day—this minute. And I—I am not in the darkness. I am in his Light. I am not alone. I am with him. I am not weak. I am in his arms. For I am his child—born of him—as I shall return to him. My life is not of to-day, not of to-morrow, but is forever; it is as the life of God." This is the joy of life—to come to this certainty. And the disciple who is so glad, the disciple who is so certain, cannot find hymn or

psalm joyous enough to express his exultation; he cannot frame the word which expresses his gratitude. What can he do but follow loyally, lovingly, heartily, the Leader who has led him, the Teacher who has taught him, the Saviour who has saved him, the Brother who has blessed him. He finds the way of life. He looks, and lo! an Open Door. Thou art indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God.

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APR 12 1917

FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

BY

REV. EDWARD EVERETT HALE, D.D



PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
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25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

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FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

"Go ye forth and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

MATTHEW xxviii. 19.

THIS baptismal formula is repeated every day of the year in thousands of Christian churches.

But I am afraid that its use is almost absolutely conventional. As one might take the stars and stripes of our flag and say that the flag is the symbol of the country, without asking why the stars are there or why the stripes are there, so I am afraid people repeat these ancient words which refer to Father, Son, and Spirit.

So I am more glad to use them, with that addition which is made to them in one of the ancient doxologies. Here the worshipper sang:

"Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning."

As it was in the beginning.

If you and I could only repeat this formula, as if it were not a formula; if you and I could only use such words, all fresh and alive with the life with which Christ spoke them; if they were

words which had meaning in them, which had living sap in them, which had red blood in them, — then we could make them the war-cry of the Church or its pæan of victory. But they are neither war-cry nor pæan if they are only repeated decorously, as the requisition of a liturgy.

The trouble is, in all our use of the Gospels, that we fail to see the amazing novelty to those people of the Saviour's statement. So we do not comprehend the sudden start, the flash of light, the determination to live, shall I say, as giants or as angels, in that infinite future which is spread before us. Indeed, it is almost impossible for us to feel this; but we must try, we must use our imaginations. Here is the Saviour in the midst of all sorts of people — Pharisees, Sadducees, Samaritans, Phœnicians, Arabs, Parthians, Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, people who have had all sorts of gods, or who have had no God, one God, or many gods. Some of these gods were what we should call devils. All of them represented force and arbitrary power. They were kings or judges, perhaps they were executioners or magistrates. Everybody was afraid of them. To be afraid of them was a requisite of what was called religion. Religion, indeed, is often defined among the writers of that time as the terror of the inferior in presence of the superior. They went so far, you remember, as to say squarely that "the fear of the

Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Into the midst of the chattering of such worshippers, cold with fear and almost dumb from terror, comes Jesus Christ. And he says, "Whom are you afraid of? What are you afraid of? This Power who maintains this world, and brings you and me into being, — he is our Father. He loves us, and whenever we know him we love him. He cannot help loving us, and we cannot help loving him." When he has to say which commandment of the old law is greatest of them all, it is Moses' instruction, which they had never understood and never fulfilled, that they should love the Lord their God. And the central statement of all he has to say to them is this statement, that God loves them and does not hate them; that God loves them and does not judge them; that God commands them only because he loves them; and that because he loves them God watches over them and cares for them. Nature is really conscious, and is on our side. Now we are used to all this. To us the words "Our Father" and the word "God" have become synonymous, and they mean the same thing when we use them, just as the two words "Lord" and "God" have become synonymous. It was not so then. It was the marvel of marvels. Here is this prophet, — clearly he knows what he is talking about, — and he says nature is not cruel, but she is kind. God is not our King, but our Father. God watches us always, and though we

do not know it, his every act and thought are act and thought of love.

Of course, then, in the watchword of the new Church, in its worship, in its baptism, in its proclamation, this word comes foremost. We are not to baptize in the name of Jehovah; not even, observe, in the name of God. We are to show the great reality which we stand for, which lifts our worship above and beyond that of all partial religions. We are to show that it is our Father to whom we come.

Now, who are we who worship? Who are we who proclaim? Who are we who baptize? Who are we who go up and down the world proclaiming these glad tidings? Are we worms of the dust?

No!

Are we so many shell-fish, lying hidden in the sand, over whom there sweep regularly by a fixed order certain ocean tides, which then sweep back again and leave us with no wills of our own,—only to drink in this or that from sunshine or from air?

No!

Are we a set of machines, carefully constructed, with so many bones, so many nerves, so many muscles and sinews, so much blood, so much cartilage, worked by a stationary battery called a brain, which will run fourscore years and then stop running?

No !

In no accurate sense are we the mere creatures of this Father. We are much more. We share his nature. We partake his life. We are his sons and his daughters. His life is our life. His being is our being. His nature is our nature. Let no man say hereafter that this language is too bold, that no man born of woman has shown such love as God shows, such tenderness as God shows, such justice as he shows, which is mercy. No man shall say this who remembers the son of Mary. The revelation which the son of Mary has made to all his brothers and sisters of mankind is, first, that the God of Nature is their Father; and, second, that in the most real and simple use of words, they are his sons as Jesus Christ is — and they are his daughters. So the new Church, when it states its watchword in an epigram, states this reality with the other. Absolute religion is the religion of the Father and his children. It is the religion of the Father and of the Son. It is the religion of the Father and of all his sons and daughters.

It proved convenient afterward for a church of priests to confine its reverence to that first-born Son as he is called. But the Saviour made no such restriction. "Ye shall do greater things than I," he said to his own. He bade all his brethren address "Our Father." First and last, his appeal to them and to us is to those who can

claim all his privileges and hold his communion with God; as when at the end he says:

“I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”

We are not to come to him in our prayer. We are to pray as he prayed, to his Father and to ours.

“But these things are too wonderful for me.” This is the answer which the camel-driver from Parthia makes to Matthew on the Day of Pentecost. This is what the stevedore at Corinth says to Silas on the pier. This is what the philosopher, Seneca, at Rome, says to Paul. “You cannot make us believe,” they say, “that this Power who is shaping and moving the world has anything in common with us.” Each of them says, “My world is a very small world. His world is infinite.” It is, then, the first duty of anybody who proclaims the eternal gospel to meet that difficulty. The Saviour of men does meet it. All his true apostles meet it, and you and I must meet it. It is perfectly true that, judged by our measuring tapes, some things which God does seem very large, and some things which we do seem very small. But to him there is nothing large and nothing small. And we, as we really come to live in him, to move in him, and have our being in him,—as we come to know what it is that we are his children, to believe in the Father and in the Son,—we shall come to know

that to child and Father there is one life in each and in both. It is one Spirit which inspires the action which we call "large," and it is the same Spirit which inspires the action which we call "small." Here is this poor mother holding her sick baby in her arms. Hour after hour, day after day, she cares for the child with unvarying and unquestioning love. The child does not thank her, cannot thank her, does not want to thank her. But the mother loves still, loves without question, loves without reward. What dictates such sacrifice? It is the same Spirit of Love which sets the universe in motion. It is the Spirit of Love which clothes the world in exquisite beauty, so that the poets may well sing that the angels delight to look on it from afar. It is the same Spirit of Love which flavors the fruit and colors the flower. That Spirit inspires that mother through the dark watches of the night and through the long hours of the day, so that that love is a perfect love and her sacrifice is unfaltering. You shall not say it is any lesser spirit. This display of this Holy Spirit, this visible victory on that little scene, as you call it, between the whitewashed walls of an attic, is as grand, as noble, as infinite, as is that other display when worlds are called into visible being. The one is perfect, and the other is perfect. The newborn Church means to assert this; it means to assert, not simply the greatness of man's origin,

but the dignity of his life. He is engaged here on affairs to which the Lord of lords and King of kings has commissioned him. For those affairs that King of kings and God of gods has commissioned him and inspired him. It is his Spirit, the Infinite and Holy Spirit which rules that universe. It is the same Spirit which quickens the kiss which this mother gives her child. Her affair, also, is infinite, and her love is infinite love.

In the beginning these early teachers meant to express this in their watchword, and that watchword meant this then, when they proclaimed the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

And that is what we mean now when we give glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, "as it was in the beginning."

A very curious study is that historical examination which shows how this simple rallying-cry was transformed into the mechanical and dead church doctrine called the Trinity, as held in the Dark Ages. Egypt had its triads of gods, such as Osiris, Isis, and Horus, which in a fashion were one God. And when the modest Christian school appeared in Alexandria, it was not hard to confuse their simple three, Father, Child, and Spirit, into the sonorous phrases which describe three adorable persons as all three one God. Easier still, when Constantine folded Christianity in his arms and almost stifled her in the embrace, for

him to grant any honors, any statement of deity, to the Jesus Christ who was crucified three centuries before, if, by that easy bargain, he might strike out from the new-born religion those fatal statements that all men were brethren, and that every man was son of God.

It is no business of ours, however, to go again into that fatal story of the Dark Ages. Thanks to the Christian Reformation and to reformation upon reformation which has sprung from it, the Dark Ages are over, and we live in the light again, or at least in the early dawn. The church doctrine of the Trinity died the day Galileo pointed his telescope at Jupiter. For us to-day, then, one of the necessities is to give glory to the divinity of man, as they did in the beginning. When we speak of the divinity of human nature, we do not confine it to the divinity of Jesus Christ, who came and went in Palestine for thirty-three years. We are talking of the infinite power of all the sons of God, and of all his daughters. We are talking of the infinite and eternal life. We are talking of the range of their duties, of the range of their possibilities, of the range of their successes, of the range of their joys. This is it to give glory to the child of God as it was in the beginning.

And in saying this I am only speaking of one detail of what would be for the higher and better life of mankind, if the Church of Christ to-day would *do* what it *says* in the decorous lip-service

of a thousand different forms. It is very true that each age likes to prepare its own symbols, each likes to make its own statements. Nay, each man does this thing. Our dear friend Freeman Clarke used to say that he had reduced the whole to the four words, "Love God, love man." These make an admirable watchword, but of course they require the statement of what you mean by God, and the other statement of what you mean by man. They suppose, that is, that nineteen centuries have brought up the world to the knowledge that God is our Father, and to the knowledge that man is the son of God, is the well-beloved son of God; that man partakes his nature, enters into his work, and enjoys his joy. For myself, I enjoy Paul's phrase, when he says that the abiding elements of life are faith and hope and love.

The French Socialists have taken the phrase "Liberty, equality, fraternity." The English Chartists, the Odd Fellows, the Sons of Temperance, — every leading organization, — has in like wise taken modern words to state its requisition of the times, and to try to turn a fresh corner of the diamond, which has not been rubbed, to do the cutting of the living hour. In every such effort to freshen men's thought and quicken their intelligence, something, certainly, is gained. But all of them involve certain eternal principles. And I say again, if the Church, when it mumbles over these principles in ancient language, could

be electrified by some flash from heaven, or quickened by some explosion of earthly dynamite, or roused by some voice of living prophet, to do the thing which she says that she believes, in that day the Kingdom of Heaven would come. Imagine, if you can, a world in which men should go and come with this sense, that nature is on their side and is not against them; a world in which a man shall rejoice in the snow-storm, in the tempest, in the rush of the tide upon the beach, as a child rejoices in the opening of a snowdrop or the perfume of a rose. Imagine a world in which a man who goes forth to his daily duty shall know that God is with him, is present life, strength, comfort, and joy. It is a world in which he does not suppose that a cruel God is pursuing him to punish him. It is a world in which he does not suppose that a critical or cynical God is weighing him on the scales, to snap him off the balance when he is done with him, because he is mean or imperfect. It is a world in which he knows that if he will only use that which is given him, if he will only resolutely eat the manna which falls to-day, it shall be to him for tonic if not for food, it shall give him strength if it do not give him joy. It is a world in which he studies the forces of God, which he has not understood till now, and lo! he finds that lightning is not the engine of God's wrath, but that it is the humble servant of his own con-

venience and pleasure! He finds that the tempest is not the punishment of man's sins, but that it is to work the wonders of God's present love. The new life, the heart and courage for daily duty, which shall make men do their work — why, as God does his work, gladly, heartily, and of course successfully, is the life which belongs to the world of our Father. It will come the moment when the world really believes in "Our Father." I suppose that that sense of God's love must come first. But it is not impossible for those to see what will come next, who have read the four Gospels. Those who have some touch or sense of the Saviour's life can imagine at least what is to come to the world when men understand as well what it is to believe in the sonship of all God's children. To go about your daily business, as we say here so often, as a prince of the blood royal. This is to share the joy of God; it is to use the strength of God. To forget that any cynic or any fool or any creed ever said that we were born in sin and conceived in iniquity; to forget that any priest or any knave ever proclaimed the folly that we were worms of the dust, and were to cry, "Vile, vile!" or, better than this, to grow up, as I have known children in this church to grow up, utterly ignorant that there ever was such folly or cynicism, which put into words such infinite depreciations of the sons of God, and of his daughters. All this is to give

energy of life and hope to the work of this world; yes, and, let me say, to its pleasures; to make of the work a divine offering, new every morning and fresh every evening; and make the pleasures, as well, to be so many steps in the advance of these princes and princesses, as they go forward, indeed, from life to life, from joy to joy, and from glory to glory. This vision seems somewhat dim, and men take it as less possible than that other vision. God reveals himself as our Father with every morning. And the glory and dignity of the sons of God scattered this world over has no such visible or tangible representation. But the Saviour was such a visible representation. Apostles, prophets, and martyrs have all lived and died in the certainty that this vision is to become more real and more to every generation. Every noble life makes the vision more certain. Every unselfish death makes us apprehend better what is its range and infinitude. So that we may well believe that, as the Church casts off its hypocrisies, treads under foot its shams, and makes its liturgies real, the Church herself shall succeed in proclaiming to all children of sorrow, as she has called them, the infinite reality that they are really sons and daughters of the living God.

Then, and perhaps not till then, will Church and world know what men have been saying when, in a half-stupid, half-mechanical way, they have pretended that they have believed in the Holy Spirit.

One spirit with God who loves the world and the same spirit in the hearts of men and women whom he loves and who love him; to go and come in my daily affair as God goes and comes in his; in the same Holy Spirit, as joyous, as pure, as unselfish, as infinite, — this is what I say is possible when I baptize a little child in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This is what I say is possible when, with my head bent, I repeat the Apostles' Creed, and say that I believe in the Holy Spirit. There is a much greater reality than saying I believe it, and that reality comes to me when I live in that Spirit, when it inspires me, when it gives me the strength of an infinite child of an infinite God, when it gives to my daily duty the breadth and range of some infinite affair. Then it shows me that the consequences of that duty shall sweep through all time and to them there shall be no distance. It shows to me that the success of to-day's endeavor is not simply the cheer in my own household or the comfort of my own friend, though that is no trifle. It is success ranging through all the world and touching all time; for here is the success, here is the victory, of the Holy Spirit of God himself. This is the spirit in which he moves the worlds and sets them in order. It is in this spirit that his sons and daughters live. They are one in him, he is one with them. This is it to live and move and have my being in my God.

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THE PLACE OF JESUS

IN THE

RELIGION OF TO-DAY.

BY

REV. JULIAN C. JAYNES.



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25 BEACON STREET BOSTON, MASS.

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THE PLACE OF JESUS IN THE RELIGION OF TO-DAY.

As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world.

JOHN ix. 5.

I wish to speak to you to-day about Jesus and his place in the religious life of the modern world.

It is by no means an obsolete and outgrown question. Many of the greatest intellectual battles of history have been fought upon this field, and I believe that the final struggle between tradition and truth, between the old faith and the new, will be carried on around the question of the personality and office of Jesus of Nazareth.

As I address myself to this subject, I rejoice that I stand in a pulpit where the widest liberty of speech is accorded, that I look into the faces of those who will credit me with sincerity of thought, however little they may assent to my views, and that I belong to a household of faith where there is no creed to be shattered, no synod to menace, and no danger of religious desolation and famine, if the independent thought be told and the honest conviction expressed.

In the outset I shall ask you to try to divest your minds, for a moment, of any bias or prejudice they may have received with regard to the person of Jesus. Imagine, if you can, that you are not the child of Christian education. Imagine, if possible, that you have never heard of Jesus, — never heard of the books that tell the story of his life.

Now turn with me to that story. Here are four short biographies, whose authorship has never been determined. They were compiled from mouth-to-mouth traditions, from fifty to one hundred years after the hero of them had died.

Open these books and read. The artless simplicity of one, the spiritual imagination of another, will compel your attention and interest. You are introduced to a unique and wonderful personality. You read of a man who was miraculously born of a virgin, whose birth was celebrated by angels' songs and supernatural manifestations, and who all through his life reversed the laws of nature at his pleasure, and after his death rose from the grave and went about among his disciples.

But within this setting of miracle you see the radiant glory of a great soul. You see a man conscious of a grand mission, a man alive with the sense of God, filled with a genuine love for humanity, and possessing a spiritual touch which changed the dead maxims of ancient morality into living truths. You see a radical, a reformer, a preacher of righteousness, a man who was singularly brave, wise, tender, merciful, and just,—a man so loyal to his heart's convictions that neither the fury of a priestly mob nor the tortures of a Roman cross could weaken his purpose or dismay his soul.

Now close the book and turn back to the world. Look along the nineteen centuries that have passed away since this wonderful man ceased to speak.

You will see one very remarkable fact, a fact which, like the incoming ship, grows clearer and larger and more imposing as it approaches your own time and place.

That fact is this, that this unique man, whom the public eye looked upon for less than three years, left an impression upon the world which the combined strength

of Jewish hatred and pagan contempt could not efface. That impression has deepened and brightened with the centuries until now the most complex and magnificent civilization the world ever saw is stamped with the influence of the Nazarene's life. Our art, our literature, our institutions, our morality, and our religion are all inwrought and bound up with the life and the teachings of Jesus. However little we may deserve the title, our civilization in name at least is a Christian civilization.

Now observe something else. Within this Christian civilization there have been working two great religious forces, the spirit of dogmatic religion and the spirit of free religious inquiry.

These two forces have been utterly opposed to each other in nature, in method, and in tendency.

The first has held the field from the beginning. Only in modern times has independent thought grown so strong as to imperil the citadel of religious dogmatism.

What has dogmatic religion done with the historic Jesus? It has constructed a complex system of theology, and at the centre has placed the figure of Christ and has called him the God of the Universe.

It took the old Jewish Scriptures and devised a scheme of salvation. It assumed an original state of innocence in Eden—a fall—a transmission of guilt to all posterity—an age-long anger of God—and finally the appearance of God in the form of Jesus to appease the wrath of Heaven and turn the divine heart once more toward mankind.

It declared that only by accepting this plan of salvation and believing that Jesus was God could men be saved from eternal death.

And for those who doubted—for those who sought for more light—for those who dared to array any scientific

truth against it—it had either discouragement or censure or persecution.

And what has the spirit of free inquiry done? It also has persecuted and maligned. It has failed to appreciate oftentimes the dignity and worth of the historic theology, but it has never been afraid of truth. It has always stood for a progressive religion, a religion that could not be bound by any creed or shut up in any Christology. It has always kept in touch with the growing revelations of human thought and knowledge.

When science threw discredit on the old theology, when it rendered the current ideas of the creation and the fall no longer tenable, when it showed that all the great races of the world have had their Bibles and their miraculous Christs,—this spirit of open religion welcomed the new truths and gladly enlarged its faith to suit the changed conditions of thought.

When the Bible fell from its high seat of supernatural authority, this spirit was there to save its noble thoughts and to welcome it back into the great sisterhood of natural and inspired books.

When the brave hand of Reason reverently removed the crown of deity from the head of Jesus, this same spirit sanctioned the act and was glad, because now, as never before, there looked out upon this world the face of a divine man.

Here, then, are these two forces,—the spirit of the old theology and the spirit of free progressive religious thought.

Both are at work in the world. We can choose the one or the other. We can accord our sympathies and we can cast in our intellectual lot with the interpretations of a thousand years ago, or with the interpretations of modern thought and knowledge.

Suppose we accept the first. Then how shall we read

these gospel stories about the life of Jesus? We must read them in the light of a theology that misunderstood the facts of human nature and was ignorant of the sovereignty of natural law. Everything floats in the atmosphere of the unreal, the irregular, the miraculous. The very words we read, no matter how confused and contradictory they are, become the utterances of Heaven, and are therefore infallible.

The coming of Jesus is now not the result of processes within humanity, but is part of a plan which lay outside of human development.

The figure of Jesus which we see pictured in those pages is the figure of a God, the Creator of the universe, living some thirty years in human form, performing miracles, arguing with the Pharisees, suffering in the garden, and uttering that strange cry: "Not my will, but thine, O God, be done,"—then finally dying upon a cross amid the jeers and scoffs of some Roman soldiers.

Remember, we must interpret his teachings also in the light of this same theology. And so when we read: "Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect," we must think of the total depravity of our own nature. When we linger over that sweet story of the Father's unchanging love for the Prodigal, we must match it with the burning wrath of God toward an erring humanity. When we look into the clear light of those wondrous beatitudes, "Blessed are the meek, the pure in heart, the doers of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of God," we must eclipse it all with the words: "Unless you believe that he who spoke these tidings was very God of God, your meekness and purity and righteousness are of no avail."

And thus the simple story of that matchless life becomes transformed into an arbitrary scheme of redemption, and the love and peace and splendid heroism

depicted there are made supernatural and are placed outside of all human experience.

But suppose we revolt against the old dogmatic ideas and accept the broader views of the new thought.

Suppose we side with the interpretations that modern knowledge has given of man and his relations to the world and to God. We shall then open these biographies of Jesus and find everything natural, human, perfectly reasonable. No theological mists shall hang over that life to distort its meaning and supernaturalize its quality. We shall know that there was no fall, no inherited guilt, and therefore no divine anger to be appeased and no need of a supernatural mediator. We shall look upon those pages as only human writings, with the errors and misinterpretations incident to human authorship. We shall see in these strange accounts of a miraculous birth, of singing angels, of the healing of the sick and the raising of the dead, only the wonder stories that blossomed in the imagination of loving but credulous disciples.

We shall touch them tenderly because of their beauty, but we shall not accept them as facts, however beautiful they may be. We shall see no God masked in human flesh, no superhuman being vicariously suffering for the sins of a race, no personality or act or event that transgresses the laws of experience or that baffles the reason to explain.

We shall simply lay aside the crudities which belong to the age in which the gospels were written, — lay aside the accessories which a later theology attached to them, — and look upon the real Jesus as he must have been, if the laws of human existence two thousand years ago were the same as they are to-day.

What then remains? We take away the crown of Godhood, we deny the power of working miracles, we

refuse to believe that he was divinely intended to be the central factor of any special scheme of salvation. What then is left to us of the value of the life of Jesus?

All is left that ever existed. All is left that men ever saw, all that the world ever needed, all that was ever necessary to the fullest and finest revelation of God in human life. We have lost the unnatural, the impossible Christ of theology. We have found the real and living Jesus of history. We have found a *man*—and for the glory of God nothing more than a man; and for the glory of humanity, nothing less than a man.

“A mere man,” we are often told. Yes, a mere man. That epithet is uttered again and again with the implication that it is a desecration of Jesus. Such an idea is the offspring of a low and unworthy conception of human nature. Could men see what it really implies—could they see the divine nobility that is implied in “mere manhood”—they would understand that Jesus could have accepted it as his grandest and proudest title.

Yes, a mere man, if you please,—a man with the natural limitations of humanity and with all the spiritual height and breadth of the greatest human soul.

I must believe this or believe nothing. I must believe that he was fallible—that he was liable to error as other men are—that he had no unique power over the laws of nature, and that he saw the same contracted physical universe that his contemporaries saw—I must believe that he imbibed many of the ideas of his age—that his sentiments were often the sentiments of the time and of the race to which he belonged—that his views and the words he uttered have no authority beyond the reasonableness that is in them and the truth that they express.

But this is only the negative side,—the side which

shows him to have been on an equality with the men of his day. But when I turn to the other side of Jesus' character, when I look at the thought, the purpose, the endeavor that filled his life, I feel that I am in the presence of the grandest spirit that the world has yet produced.

When I see the simple beauty of his nature, the lofty view which he took of life, the fine loyalty to duty which everywhere marked his work,—I can understand the secret of his influence through centuries of time, and I can scarcely wonder that men have forgotten that he was a man and have worshipped him as a God.

There must be somewhere along the line of human development a type of manhood superior to the rest. You may call it accident or the design of God—but somewhere there is one individual who is the highest and the best.

To me Jesus is that one. He is the flower of humanity. Divine? Yes, as all men are divine. God? Yes, as all men are made in the image of Heaven and are living temples of the Most High. Not infallible, not perfect, not a great scholar, not a student of philosophy or science; and yet with a mind that went so straight to the heart of things, with a moral intuition that so instinctively found the right, with a spiritual insight that so clearly apprehended God, and withal a heart so sympathetic and brave and true,—that he was from side to side the richest, fullest expression of the real greatness and divinity of man.

What then is the office of Jesus in the religion of to-day? What place shall we give him in our thought? How shall we think of him, now that he stands as a man among men?

I. First of all, as the great revealer of God. He spoke as no other man had ever spoken of the real presence, of

the indwelling spirit of the Most High, in the world and in the life of men.

Other men had talked about God. Some had caught glimpses of his justice, some had seen his majesty, some his omnipotence, some his mercy, but it was Jesus who merged all these broken lights into one single beam of radiant love and called it Fatherhood. He conceived of God as in the world and not outside of it — as in the life of humanity and not a solitary despot beyond the clouds. He thought of him — nay, he *knew* him — as the spiritual Father of mankind, as the God who loved men as His children, who punished only to save, who asked for righteousness and not symbols of worship, who thought of the falling sparrow, bound up the wounds of the broken-hearted, sought the wayward in the wilderness of sin and folly and self-absorption and would lead them back to the ways of joy and peace.

This was the God that Jesus knew — this was the God he came to reveal. I say, the God whom he knew, for I think no one can read the story of Jesus' life without realizing that he did know God in a way which we do not seem to find in the lives of other great religious teachers of the world.

He knew him as a real and living presence. The thought of God was with him continually. The air, the waters of Galilee, the hills of his native land, the people he met by the wayside, the experiences of his own life, all were witnesses to him of the brooding love of God the Father.

Among all men, it seems to me Jesus stands pre-eminent as the one who lived nearest to God, whose love of him was strongest, whose trust in him was the grandest, whose thought of him was the truest and the best.

And knowing God as he did, it is not strange that the divine spirit within so exalted the man that his lovers

have deified him. It is not strange that his ideas of God should have so stamped themselves upon his time that the revelation could not die. And to-day, when we pause to consider, we shall find that almost all the thoughts of God that are dearest to us, that are most helpful and inspiring to us, have come down from that revelation of the Father which Jesus made to the world.

II. And then again, Jesus stands in our thought to-day as the great revealer of the dignity, the worth, the divinity of human nature. As I think of that, I marvel that the church could have dared to sacrifice such a shining example of manhood for the sake of completing a metaphysical trinity. If he had never been thought of as a God, no theologian would ever have been bold enough to talk of total depravity and the native meanness of human nature in the face of that splendid type of humanity.

Jesus himself is the best answer to the old doctrines about man. Look at him as he stands there in the gospels, and you see the material out of which God made humanity.

The highest wave that ever flashed in the sunlight is part of the great ocean from which it rose. And so this great life in which men saw the majesty of God was but the highest expression of that common divinity which beats and surges within the bounds of human nature everywhere. Jesus stands as the living witness of your possibilities and mine, the witness of what humanity can be when it asserts its divinity and rises to its best.

Where shall I look for the explanation of my own being? Where shall I go to find the image of what God intended me to be? Shall I find the key of my destiny in the instincts of the brute and the passions of the savage? Shall I study the Bushman of Australia or the native of Patagonia, and say this is human nature?

No, I measure my humanity by the noblest man I know. I take the evidence at the top and not at the bottom. I go to Jesus and interpret my nature and my destiny by his character. I say he is the grandest and the best, and in the monument of his life I see the moral grandeur to which man, the child of God, can lift himself.

And so, to me, Jesus is the morning star of the race. He is man from whom the dust of selfishness has been winnowed by the breath of the spirit. "He is man from whose voice the tones of greed and passion, the cry of the ape and the scream of the tiger, have wholly died away." He is man whose heart is the deep heart of humanity itself. He is a living representative of simple manhood, and is the perpetual revelation of the greatness and the sanctity of our common human nature.

III. And then there is one other thing which Jesus represents in the religious life of to-day. He stands as a spiritual leader. He marches at the head of the column. He inspires by his example, he commands by his teaching, he marks out the way to God by the footprints of his own life.

I need not say how much his leadership has meant in the moral and religious life of Christendom ; how under the guidance of his influence millions of lives have grown fine and beautiful ; how by the light of his example men have seen the divineness of duty ; how in loyalty to his name they have met, without a murmur, derision and shame and death.

And we need that leadership to-day as much as men have in other days. I know how reluctant some are to take any life as a measure of their own or to acknowledge any man as master. I think I can understand the noble independence that inspires the feeling. But most of us are not strong enough to live on abstract principles alone. The rank and file of men need a captain, need some mighty

voice, some commanding presence, that embodies what they want to do and what they aspire to be.

When we are weak, when the coward awakes within us, when the storm of adversity beats into our faces, it is a wonderful help just to look up and see how some other life has trembled and suffered too, and yet has won the victory at last.

And it is here, it seems to me, that the moral leadership of Jesus comes in. He is so completely ours — ours as the founder of our religion ; ours in all his relations with our moral standards ; ours in the identity of his experiences with our own — that he becomes the guide, the helper, the inspirer of our troubled lives.

I therefore accept his leadership. I do not hesitate to call him master. When I have attained his ethical standards, when I have come as close to God as he did, then I will begin to talk about an outgrown Christianity.

When humanity develops some higher type of manhood than we see in Jesus, it will then be time for us to think about changing our allegiance. But until that day arrives, Jesus must remain in fact at least as the spiritual leader of men.

But, friends, that leadership becomes destroyed the moment you place him above humanity. His victories mean nothing to me as long as I am required to believe that he was more than a man. A God was tempted in the wilderness and conquered ! That has nothing to do with my tried and tempted life. But the moment I see there a human being like myself, fighting the demon and winning at last, then all the inspiration of that victory is caught up into my own life and I feel that I too can say : "Get thee behind me, Satan."

I see a God suffering in the garden ! I see him again bearing his cross to Calvary and dying upon it ! That is a supernatural tragedy. It may fill me with awe. It

may overpower my mind. But it does not touch the springs of my daily action. But let me read that tragedy into a human life; let me see a human soul checking its agony with the prayer of trust; let me see manhood glorifying itself with death for the sake of the truth,—and my whole life is stirred to its depths, and I am stronger to bear pain, stronger to mount the cross of duty, because of the vision I have seen.

I confess it seems to me, and I say it with all reverence, it seems to me that all this trial and suffering and temptation, this agony and death, are somehow empty and hollow and artificial when I associate them with the God of heaven. But when I see my own humanity bearing them with matchless courage, then they become real and significant and put a power into the life of Jesus that a suffering and crucified God could not possess.

Oh, what a mistake it is, then, to separate Jesus from the human race by all this pomp and circumstance of Godhood! What a mistake it is to rob the world of the inspiration of his life by lifting him into the clouds? What a mistake it is to turn all Palestine into a wonderland of miracle and sign, to conceal the great Nazarene in the mists of supernatural power, and to change the simple gospel stories of his life into the oracles of an infallible authority.

Let us wake from this theological dream; let us get out of this unreal and fanciful world and lay hold of something that is tangible and lifelike and true.

Give back to Jesus the humanity he wore. Give back the simplicity he loved, the humility he exemplified, the office of simple service which was dearer to him than all the glory of kings; give him back his divinity and not the crown of deity, and he then becomes what he never otherwise could,—the herald of the Fatherhood of God, the revealer of the dignity of human

nature, the spiritual leader of the world, the great luminous example of manly goodness, the undying source of light and inspiration for the guidance of men out of despair into hope—out of weakness into strength—out of sin into salvation.

WAS JESUS GOD?

HOW DID HE COME TO BE WORSHIPPED
AS GOD?

BY

REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND.



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FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

APR 12 1917

WAS JESUS GOD?

HOW CAME HE TO BE WORSHIPPED?

Jesus of Nazareth, a *man* approved of God, among you. — SAINT PETER.

To us there is but one God, the Father. — SAINT PAUL.

I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and unto my God and your God. — JESUS.

Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets. One man was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his world. He said, in this jubilee of sublime emotion: "I am divine. Through me God acts; through me, speaks. Would you see God, see me; or see thee, when thou also thinkest as I now think." The understanding caught this high chant from the poet's lips, and said in the next age: "This was Jehovah come down out of heaven. I will kill you if you say he was a man." The idioms of his language and the figures of his rhetoric have usurped the place of his truth; and churches are not built on his principles, but on his tropes. Christianity becomes a Mythus, as the poetic teaching of Greece and of Egypt before. — EMERSON.

I INVITE you to a consideration — I hope it will be a very candid consideration — of the questions, Was Jesus God? and, How did he come to be worshipped as God?

The impression seems to be quite common that to regard Jesus as not God, but as a man, is to degrade and dishonor him.

I think, on the contrary, that it is to lift him into truer and really greater honor. For — did you never think of it? — a God pinched and compressed into the limit of our finite humanity becomes thereby of necessity a very meagre and small God. Jesus, born as a babe, and in a few years dying; during his boyhood growing in knowledge as you and I do; after he was a man sometimes

disappointed; trying to accomplish ends, and again and again failing because of opposition; declaring that there were some things that he did not know, — furnishes a picture of a God so meagre, so inadequate, so like the little gods that the heathen believe in, that we instinctively push it aside, and demand for our worship something simply infinitely higher and larger, lifted wholly out of the category of this finiteness.

Jesus as a *man* commands the honor and homage of all the world. None can look upon him without feeling the beauty, the greatness, the essential divineness of his life. But clothe him in the garments of deity, and how quickly does his greatness disappear! You have put upon him robes a thousand times too large for any possible finite being. Thus, however good your intention, you really but mock him. How much greater is the honor done him by pushing aside all this childish folly, this ecclesiastical and theological fiction of the ages, and letting him stand up in the strength and winning grace of his incomparable manhood!

But not only do we most honor Jesus by accepting him as just what he claimed to be, a brother man to all of us, but I think that thus also we bring him closer to our humanity, and make him far more helpful to us all as an example, as a guide, as an inspirer in life, than he can possibly be when thought of as a deity. How can a deity be an example to us? We are not deities. God cannot sin; how, then, can God's example of sinlessness help us in our sin? God cannot be tempted; how, then, can his example in resisting the tempter help us in our temptation? But a *man*, who has been tempted as we are, who has suffered as we suffer, and yet who has overcome, and out of it all has risen up into obedience and purity and peace, — such a one can be an example and an inspiration to all men.

“Since he is mortal, even as am I,
And yet so God-like, may not I control
My earthly nature, and lift up my soul
To Christ’s, our perfect standard, if I try?”

“I hold that he stands nearer to all men,
And fills a higher and more useful place,
Than when he wore a supernatural grace, —
What man has done, that man may do again.”

So, then, I think that not only loyalty to truth, but also reverence toward Jesus and desire to make his life practically serviceable to men, unite to urge the importance of the inquiry which we have before us.

In endeavoring to find an answer to our question, Was Jesus God? I shall interrogate: (1) Reason, or Common Sense; (2) The Bible; (3) History, Secular and Church; and (4) I shall endeavor to find the *real origin* of the *idea* that Jesus was God.

I. First, then, what does calm, unbiassed reason have to say upon this subject, judging on general principles and from the nature of the case?

If we could only strip ourselves of our conventional habits of thought and the influence of early education, I apprehend we should require but a very short time to arrive at a conclusion. Familiarity with an idea has great power to blind us to its strangeness, its absurdity, its inherent incredibility. Many an idea which, could it come to our minds freshly and for the first time, would seem unworthy even of consideration, may be carried in a mind which has become familiar with it from childhood without a perception at all of its irrational and essentially absurd character.

So I ween it is with this idea of the infinite and eternal God, who inhabits all worlds and holds all power in his hands, “whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain,” coming to this little world of ours, being born as

a babe, living in a human body for thirty-three years or so, and dying upon a cross. Surely it would seem as if the very statement of the idea would, to any rational mind, carry its own refutation.

And it does carry its own refutation, instantly, whenever we see it in any form in which we can judge of it without bias; as, for example, when we see essentially the same thing in connection with other religions, outside of our own.

Go back to the days of the old Roman Empire, and you find the Roman people declaring their emperors to be gods, and worshipping them. What do you do? You turn away, pronouncing it superstition and folly.

Go among the various peoples of central and eastern Asia, where Buddhism prevails, and you find men there to-day worshipping Buddha as God, just as Orthodox Christians worship Jesus.

Go among the Brahmans of India, and they will tell you that God has been incarnate in the world, but it was in their Hindu Krishna.

Go to Thibet, and there you will be told that every one of their Grand Llamas is a special incarnation of God.

Do you believe these people? Certainly not. Yet they all present to you what seems to them strong evidence for what they affirm. To you it seems no evidence at all. Now turn round and present to them your reasons for your belief that Jesus was God, and it will seem to them no evidence at all. Yet you accept it. What is the explanation? This: each has been educated from childhood into his own belief, and so he does not see the absurdity of it. But when he comes to see the very same thing in a different dress and under other circumstances, its unreasonableness at once comes to view.

It is worth our while to ask ourselves this question: If so astonishing an event did really happen on our earth

nineteen hundred years ago as the special and personal residence here for thirty or forty years of the infinite and eternal God, — an event, if true, the most astonishing that it is possible to conceive; an event beside which the lives and careers of an Alexander, a Cæsar, a Mahomet, a Charlemagne, a Napoleon, and a Washington, all combined, are as nothing, — I say, if such an event actually did occur, how does it happen that so little comparatively has come of it?

Grant that Christianity has resulted; yet Christianity, even when it has had eighteen hundred years of time given it in which to grow and expand, is not yet the predominant religion of the world. Buddhism has a still more numerous following, while two or three other religions are not very far behind. Now, to say the least, this would seem a marvel, that the religion which the infinite God himself had come down and lived on earth a third of a century on purpose to found should still, after almost two thousand years, be second in number of adherents to Buddhism, founded by a mere man, and not very greatly in advance of Mohammedanism, founded also by a man.

But, furthermore, as we inquire into this matter of the coming of God to live and die as a human being upon the earth, we discover that quite as strange a part of it as anything was the object that he is said to have had in view in thus coming. When people tell us that the Almighty did thus come to our world, what object do they say he had in so doing? They tell us that his object was to save the human race from perdition in an eternal hell. Well, has he saved the race from that hell? How large a proportion of the race has his coming resulted in saving?

Our Orthodox friends, with their theological views, find themselves obliged to make the proportion very

small, — possibly one-fiftieth part of all who have lived on the earth from the creation up to this time, or possibly one-tenth ; I suppose few would put the proportion higher than one-tenth. But, now, this is all very strange. You can hardly call an effort a success which succeeds in accomplishing only one-tenth of what it aimed to accomplish. So, then, the Almighty was not successful. Thus it would seem. I do not see how to escape the conclusion. Moreover, it seems a very singular proceeding, to say the least, that a God of infinite power and wisdom and love should have *created* an eternal hell, should have decreed that every being who sinned should go there, and then deliberately should have peopled the earth with a race of beings whom he knew would sin. Nor does it seem any less singular or unreasonable when we are told that to try to remedy matters he afterwards came himself to the earth as a human being, and suffered and died, and as a result succeeded in saving, say, *one in ten* of the race.

No, friends, look at it how we will, the idea that the infinite, eternal, and all-wise God, who made the heavens and the earth, “in whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning,” has at some time come to our world and assumed a special human body, in the person of the great Teacher of Nazareth or of any other human being, for the purpose of saving the race from some supposed perdition, or for any other purpose, need only to be candidly and fairly looked at, as it seems to me at least, to appear to the very last degree unreasonable. It is one of those things which we can but marvel should be believed by any intelligent person, and which would not be believed by any intelligent person except for the fact that people are taught it when they are children, too young to perceive how utterly irrational it is.

II. I proceed now, in the second place, to interrogate

the *Bible*, and see what *it* has to teach. I cannot, of course, touch all the arguments or all the scripture passages supposed to bear upon this subject. I shall try, however, to pass by nothing that is vital to the question at issue.

Let us look first for a moment at the Old Testament. It is claimed that there are Old Testament predictions of Jesus which prove that he was God; but scholarship is more and more showing that these claims are without foundation. By far the most clear and weighty of these so-called predictions is that found in Isaiah ix. 6. It reads in our Common Version: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

Concerning this passage two things are to be observed. First, there is no reason whatever to believe that the prophet had Jesus in mind in uttering it, but much reason to believe the contrary. Second, the highest scholarship shows that our English version gives a faulty translation of the Hebrew, and that a correct translation makes the passage descriptive, not of an incarnate deity, but simply of a human king. The words in the passage which seem to indicate deity are "Mighty God" and "Everlasting Father;" but the best scholars, even in Orthodox ranks, leave these words out, and give us others in their place which refer plainly to a man. Instead of "Mighty God," Dr. Briggs gives us as the correct translation "divine hero," and instead of "Everlasting Father," "distributer of spoils." President Harper gives us as the true renderings "a god of a hero," or "a very great hero," and "distributer of spoils." Professor Robertson Smith, of England, agrees with these renderings, as do the greatest European scholars, such as Dr.

Kuenen. Says Robertson Smith, "Isaiah's ideal is only the perfect performance of the ordinary duties of monarchy." Thus fades away the passage which is by far the strongest quoted from the Old Testament in support of the deity of Jesus.

Let us come now to the New Testament. It is sometimes claimed that Jesus must have been God because of the stories of his miraculous birth found in the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke. Is this claim well founded? I reply: First, even if we grant that these miraculous birth stories are historically true, they do not prove the deity of Jesus. They show that his nature was extraordinary, and perhaps superhuman, but they do not take him out of the realm of the created and the finite. They carry no necessary implication that he was the uncreated and omnipotent God, but rather the opposite.

Secondly, and still more important, these birth stories bear evidence of being legendary, not historic. They are found only in Matthew and Luke; they are not found in Mark, which is almost certainly the oldest Gospel. This fact is suspicious. It suggests for them a probably late origin, after the completion of Mark. Quite as suspicious, too, is the fact that Jesus himself never refers to any such miraculous birth; and nobody during his lifetime seems to have known anything of it. If God, and not man, was his father, and if his birth was heralded by angels and attended by miraculous presences, why were his brothers and relatives so long in believing on him? Even his own mother seems not to have known of the story that he had no human father, for she represents Joseph as his father. When the twelve-year-old boy is lost in the Temple, and Mary and Joseph find him, she says to Jesus, "Thy father Joseph and I have sought thee sorrowing."

These miraculous birth stories seem to be simply a legendary accretion that gathered about the history of Jesus long after his death, and subsequent, as I have said, to the compilation of the Gospel of Mark. The Gospels were slow in coming into existence. For a long time there were no written records of the great teacher. As time passed away, and his impressive figure faded into the distance of years, one and another of his followers wrote down what they could remember of his words and deeds. Then began the process of gathering together these precious *memorabilia*. We get traces of various compilings and editings, the final results of which were our Gospels, Mark, Matthew, and Luke. But forty, sixty, eighty years had elapsed. It is not strange that by this time a legendary element should have crept in.

Legends have grown up around nearly all other great men of the past, especially great religious leaders, — as Buddha, Zoroaster, Mahomet, and Moses. Why should they not around Jesus? Especially is there a tendency to associate the miraculous with the *birth* of the great. Buddha was born of a virgin; so was Fo-hi, the ancient founder of the Chinese Paradise. Zoroaster was miraculously conceived. Romulus, the founder of Rome, was son of the god Mars. Alexander the Great had a human mother, but his father was the god Jupiter. Cæsar was called the son of the goddess Venus. There is nothing strange, therefore, that similar legends of a miraculous birth should have attached themselves to Jesus, or that some of them should have crept into the accounts of him that have come down to us. But can any one fail to see that such stories no more prove the deity of Jesus than they do the deity of Cæsar, or Alexander, or Zoroaster, or Buddha?

Turning now from the legendary to the historic parts

of the Gospels, what do we find there regarding the question before us?

Grant, for the sake of argument,—though I do not grant this in fact,—that there are two, or three, or four, or even six passages in the biographies of Jesus which seem, on the face of them and isolated from their settings, to teach that he was God. Shall we let them outweigh the fact, no more to be evaded than the sun at midday is to be evaded, that the entire New Testament, from beginning to end, in every discourse and every act of Jesus, in the whole story of his life, and in every exposition of Christian doctrine made by the apostles, declares, or else necessarily implies, that Jesus was inferior to God, and was not himself God? If Jesus had been God, and had been known to be such by the writers of the biographies we have of him, we should expect the fact, so transcendent in its importance, to have been made clear and unmistakable everywhere from first to last, and not to rest for proof upon, to say the most, half a dozen passages, every one of them, moreover, capable of being interpreted in such a way as to lose all value as proof.

It will certainly be a marvellous thing if Abraham Lincoln shall go down to coming ages having no clear evidence of the fact that he was President of the United States during the War of the Rebellion, coupled with his name in the histories of his life and time that shall be preserved. Yet this would not be a hundredth part so marvellous or so unaccountable as that the supreme God of the universe should incarnate himself in Jesus of Nazareth, or in any other human being, and dwell on the earth thirty-three years on purpose to make himself and his salvation known to men, and then should allow the histories of the time and the biographies of the man in whom he had incarnated himself to be so written as to

convey to future ages no clear indication of what he had done, — indeed, to be so written as to convince a large proportion of the ablest scholars and most intelligent minds of the world that no such special incarnation had ever taken place.

But let us look carefully at the biographies and see just how they do represent Jesus.

The narratives of the life of Jesus that we possess are four in number, — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Of these the first three, called the Synoptic Gospels, are regarded by almost all the reliable critics as much more certainly authentic than the Fourth. Indeed, a large number of the most eminent biblical scholars have long entertained grave doubts as to whether the Fourth Gospel came from the pen of John, or any disciple; and many go as far as to affirm that the evidence is irresistible that it did not.

Now, Jesus in the first three, — the most authentic of the Gospels, — certainly never *says* that he *is God*; but, on the contrary, he does over and over again say what is at least equivalent to the declaration that he is *not God*.

Even going forward and adding the Fourth Gospel, it is essentially the same. So far as I know, there are only two passages purporting to come from the lips of Jesus even in this Gospel which are ever quoted in proof of his supreme deity. One of these is, "I and my Father are one." But this he sufficiently explains when he afterwards prays for his disciples that "they may be one even as we are." Certainly we can find no proof that Jesus was God in a passage which simply says that he and God are one in the same sense in which he prays that his disciples may be one.

The other passage sometimes quoted from this Gospel in proof that Jesus represented himself as God is, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." But does this

teach that Jesus is God? Surely not; for, mark, it teaches that if Jesus is God at all, he is God *the Father*. But not even our staunchest Trinitarian friends hold that Jesus was God *the Father*. The passage evidently intends to teach that in Jesus was seen, in a certain spiritual sense, the image, or likeness, or representation, of God's nature and character, just as it is a very common thing for us all to say of a boy, "If you have seen him, you have seen his father," or of a family of children, "If you have seen one, you have seen all." Precisely thus those who had seen Jesus had seen God, his Father and ours, shining out as it were through him, in his love, his purity, his truth, all the beauty and excellency and divineness of his character. Hence the deep and beautiful significance of his saying, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

These two passages, I say, are the only passages in all the Gospels which, so far as I know, are ever quoted as declarations by Jesus himself of his supreme deity; and yet neither of them, as we see when we come to look carefully, teaches anything of the kind. Whereas the declarations from the lips of Jesus to the effect that he was not God are numerous in all four of the Gospels. Among them are such passages as these: "My Father is greater than I," "I can of mine own self do nothing," "The words which I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me [as he dwells in all his human children] he doeth the works," "My meat is to do the will [not of myself, but] of *him that sent me*," "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Can God say of himself that there are some things which he does not know? "Why callest thou *me* good? There is none good *but one*, that is *God*." Could God have said that? "I ascend unto my Father

and your Father, to *my God* and your God." Could God have said that?

We see, too, that Jesus constantly prays to another as God, teaches his disciples to pray to that other and not to himself, and nowhere does he teach or intimate that he is a being to whom any one is to pray, now or in any coming time. Surely this is all very marvellous, if he was *deity*!

Nor is this all. When a youth, we find him spoken of as "increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." But can God increase in wisdom? Can it be said of God that he increases in favor with himself? When the young prophet sets out upon his public lifework, we find one of his first experiences represented as being that of a long and very severe temptation: the devil tempts him by offering him, among other things, all the kingdoms of this world. But can God be tempted? Especially can he be tempted by the devil with an offer of the petty kingdoms of this world when all worlds are already his own? We find Jesus always mingling with men as himself a man. He suffers as others suffer. He weeps as others weep. He is disappointed as others are disappointed, —as, for example, when he comes to the fig-tree expecting to find figs, and finds none. But can God be disappointed? Jesus has his hours of discouragement and gloom as other men have. For example, on the cross he exclaims in agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But can God be discouraged? Can God forsake himself? If Jesus had been God, would not such language have been mere pretence? Nay, would it not have been out and out deception?

Is it said that at least the miracles of Jesus prove him to have been God? I reply, the Bible represents man as working miracles. Elijah and Elisha go so far as even to raise the dead.

No, friends, whatever else Jesus may have claimed, if the Synoptic Gospels are true, he did not claim to be God. Nor do the Gospels make such a claim for him. Everywhere in their pages he is portrayed as a man, a brother of all other men, and a child of the infinite Father, as all other men are.

It is plain, too, that the disciples of Jesus did not believe him to be God. For note: if he really was the Almighty Jehovah, and if his disciples really regarded him as such, there must have been some particular time when they first found out this startling and stupendous fact. And when they found it out, it must have produced in them, one and all, feelings of the most overwhelming amazement and awe; and from that hour their conduct toward him must have been utterly changed, and they must have shown in every act and word their feeling of humility and homage in his presence.

But as we examine the accounts that have been handed down to us, what do we find? Any record of such a discovery made by them at any time? None. Any sign of such changed conduct toward Jesus? None whatever. They all continue to treat him to the end with the familiarity of a fellow-man, and give no intimation that they even dream that he is other than human. At one time Peter took occasion to rebuke Jesus. Does this look as if then he thought him God, the Almighty? In the Garden of Gethsemane all the disciples forsook Jesus and fled. Does this indicate that they had yet found out that he was the Supreme Jehovah? During the trial of Jesus, Peter denied him. Would he have done so if he had thought him omnipotent? He would not have denied Cæsar at Rome. How, then, could he have denied one whom he believed to be more powerful than a thousand Cæsars? At the sepulchre the disciples wept, disconsolate, believing that their leader's cause

had failed, and that all their hopes were blighted. This surely shows they had not yet found out that he was God. When, then, did they find it out?

Was it after the resurrection? There is no record or sign of its occurring then. On the contrary, the accounts represent the disciples as continuing their former familiar manner of intercourse with Jesus up to the very morning of the ascension. Indeed, their conversation with him on that very morning does not differ at all in character from those of earlier times. Nor is there any sign even on the Day of Pentecost that they had yet made the stupendous discovery. If at that time they had been possessed of this astounding knowledge, do you think it would have been possible for Peter so to hide it and so to dissimulate before the people as to have coolly begun his sermon on that great occasion, "Jesus of Nazareth, a *man* approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him"? Nor is there any account or indication of this knowledge ever coming to them at all.

Now, is such an amazing omission for one moment credible? Could we not more easily account for the omission from the Gospels of anything else whatever than the omission of the record or announcement of an event which, if true, was beyond comparison the most important in the world's whole history?

Let us now leave the Gospels and pass to the Acts and Epistles, and see if here we can discover any evidence that the apostles believed Jesus to have been God. What do we find in these books? We find still Christ spoken of as a created and subordinate being. True, he is often referred to in very exalted terms. It is plain that as the years went by he became lifted up in the minds of his followers to a great height, and surrounded with a very splendid halo of idealization. Evidently the

exceedingly mystical Logos doctrine of the time had come to some extent into the minds of some of them, — at least the author of the Fourth Gospel, — and the general philosophical and religious thought of the age, which was mystical, and which tended to wipe out the line between the human and the superhuman, between men and gods, — evidently all had had its effect in causing the apostles to portray Jesus, certainly not as God, but sometimes as a being whom we, with our sober, scientific, less imaginative, less dreamy, more clear-thinking minds find some difficulty in putting always in the category of the human. But this is as far as we can go. This said, all is said. To claim these occasionally idealized and more or less mystical representations of Jesus as proof that he was God, or that the apostles thought he was God, would be utterly unwarrantable, as will be seen clearly by simply referring to a few of the large number of declarations which are not entangled in any mysticism, but which are clear, clean-cut, unmistakable. “Him hath *God* ordained,” “him hath *God* set forth,” “him hath *God* raised up,” is the constant burden of apostolic teaching. God was over him, guiding him, inspiring him, helping him, giving him wisdom and power. This is the constant representation. How many times do the apostles designate the Almighty as the *God* as well as the *Father* of Jesus Christ! Saint Paul says, “There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the *man* Christ Jesus.” Saint John says, “God loved us and sent his son to be a propitiation,” etc. How misleading are such words as these, if that son was himself God! What deception am I guilty of if I say, “I sent my son,” meaning I went myself!

That old passage in 1 John, “There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one,” — a passage which far

more than any other has been the corner-stone of the doctrine of the Trinity,—is now universally cast out as spurious, there being no longer even a shadow of a reason for believing it to be genuine. Every respectable scholar now omits it. If you will look at the Revised Version of the New Testament, made a few years ago by a committee of scholars of all Protestant denominations, you will find there the passage left out as spurious.

Perhaps nothing in all the writings of the apostles has more light to throw upon the question of the deity of Jesus than the Epistle of James. I wish you would read it with this question in view. James, the writer of this epistle, was probably the brother of Jesus, son of the same parents, brought up in the same home. Surely he, if anybody, then, knew if Jesus was God. But read the epistle, and you will not find the slightest intimation of any such thing. Now, how are you going to account for this? If Jesus had been God, do you think his own brother would not have known it, or would not have thought it a thing of enough moment to be worth mentioning? Do you think he would fill his epistle full of other things, and not mention or hint the fact of most importance in all the history of the world? You see it is simply incredible.

This, then, in brief, is the testimony which the New Testament has for us bearing upon the question, Was Jesus God?

And now let me ask in all candor, Is it proof? Does it begin to be proof? Does it even show that any of the New Testament writers *thought* that Jesus was God? If it did that, still that would not be certain proof that he was; for we know how easy it is for people to be mistaken even nowadays. How much more easy was it in a credulous, uncritical age like that in which Jesus appeared! We are told in the Acts that the people of

Lystra thought *Paul* was a god. Yet none of *us* think he was. So that I say, even if the New Testament writers had *supposed* Jesus to be a deity, and had so recorded, still that would be only slight proof that he was such. What, then, shall we say when we find, as we have found, that the New Testament writers, as a whole, teach nothing of the kind, but the opposite. No one of them, with the possible exception of the author of the Fourth Gospel, who has to be thrown out of the account in a discussion of this kind, because we do not know who he was, and because he wrote his Gospel almost certainly as late as near the middle of the second century, after the work of deifying Jesus had begun, — I say, not a single New Testament writer, with this one possible exception, seems even to have dreamed of Jesus being the Almighty God. His neighbors all speak of him and treat him as a man; his parents and brothers and sisters do the same; his disciples do the same. It is plain that the idea of his being a deity was the invention of a later time. How and when and why it arose we shall see presently.

III. Leaving now our interrogation of the Bible upon the subject before us, shall we next turn for a very few moments to *History*.

There are two different and distinct branches of history which have testimony to give, negative or positive, with regard to this question which we are studying.

The first is *Sacred* or *Church History*. Did the early Christian Church regard Jesus as God?

In reply to this inquiry I unhesitatingly answer, No. The evidence is clear that the early Christian Church was Unitarian. The doctrine of the Trinity — including, of course, the doctrine of the deity of Christ — came into being, as is well known, in the second, third, and fourth centuries, having had its origin unquestionably in the

speculative and exceedingly mystical neoplatonism of Alexandria. A theological battle arose over it, which raged throughout Christendom, tearing in pieces the Greek and Latin Churches in the most terrible manner, and awakening everywhere alienation and hatred where before had been comparative peace and harmony. The Council of Nicæa, which established the Trinitarian doctrine as orthodox and to be henceforth the faith of the Church, for a long time hung in doubtful balance over it. And when at last the council decided in favor of the doctrine, the real influence which turned the scale seems to have been the Emperor Constantine, a man who shaped all his course and conduct by what he thought policy, having several different times in his life changed back and forth between Unitarianism and Trinitarianism. And so but for the influence of the crafty emperor, who happened at that moment to be training with the Trinitarian party, Unitarianism, the prevailing belief of the Church up to that time, — including, of course, this doctrine of the non-deity of Jesus, — would doubtless have been the prevailing belief of Christendom to-day instead of Trinitarianism with its doctrine of the deity of Jesus.

So much, then, for our interrogation of Church History. Let us turn now for a moment's look outside of the Christian Church, and see whether the *Secular* or *Profane* History (so called) of those early times has any light to throw upon the question before us.

To revert to a thought which I have already slightly touched, it really would seem incredible that the Creator of the Universe should have come into human form and dwelt for a term of years upon this earth without its being known at least to the age in which the event occurred. Very well, then; *did* the age of Jesus have any sort of *suspicion* even that in Palestine there was an event of such stupendous magnitude transpiring? That

whole age is well covered by numerous and reliable histories. The most important political and social events occurring within the bounds of the Roman Empire are preserved to us in detail. As to Palestine, the country in which the occurrence under consideration is said to have taken place, it was a country lying far inside the boundary lines of the empire. Men well known at Rome and among the great men of the time had for a considerable term of years been its governors. Greek learning had for three centuries flowed freely through it. Certainly the Jews themselves must have been familiar with the notable events going on within its borders. What, then, do we find in the annals of the time regarding an event so much more astonishing than anything in the history of Rome or Athens, or than anything that had gone before it in the history of Palestine? Surely we shall find the histories of the Greeks and of the Romans, and especially of the Jews of the time, crowded with it, giving everything else a secondary place in comparison.

But when we turn to the histories of the age, what do we find? Three Roman writers — Tacitus, Pliny the younger, and Suetonius — mention Jesus, thus proving that there was such a person, and that he originated the Christian movement. But that is all. Not the slightest intimation is given that there was reason to believe him to be the eternal God, or that he was anything else but a man.

Turning to Jewish historians and writers of the time, we find Jesus mentioned in very derogatory ways in the Talmud, by those who were evidently his bitter enemies; and also we find him somewhat favorably mentioned in two short passages by the eminent historian, Josephus. One of these passages is probably wholly spurious, and the other partly so; and yet, even if we accept them both as fully genuine, they give no intimation that the

historian, Jesus' own countryman, and born only two years after the Crucifixion, believed the teacher of Nazareth to be God.

And these are absolutely *all* the mentions which history, outside of the Bible, makes of Jesus, — Roman history, Greek history, or Jewish history.

So, then, we have reached very quickly the answer to our question as to whether the age of Jesus knew anything about the Almighty and Eternal God dwelling incarnate in its midst.

No, history drives us to affirm either that Jesus was not God, or else that an event, as I have already said, incomparably more startling in its character and more towering in its grandeur and significance than any other in the history of mankind took place absolutely in a corner, — unknown to the world, unknown to the nation among whom it occurred, unknown to anybody except a little company of a dozen obscure men, and, as I think I have shown the overwhelming evidence to be, unknown to a single one of them.

So much, then, for the testimony of *History* as to whether the contemporaries of Jesus believed him to be God.

I said in the beginning of my lecture that I should interrogate first, Reason; second, the Bible; third, History, — to see what answer each would make to our question. I have now finished the inquiry in each of these three directions.

Only one thing more remains for me to do, — namely, to attempt to throw a little light, if I may, upon the question of how it was that men came to suppose Jesus to be divine. Where did the idea of God's incarnation in him come from? We can hardly believe that such an idea could of itself and independently have leaped into existence in the minds of so large a part of the Christian

Church! there must at least be an explanation; there must have been a producing cause. Can we discover them?

I think we shall be able easily to find an explanation and a cause, which at the same time will be an additional argument in proof that the supposed deity of Jesus was only a speculation or superstition, and not a reality. But let us see.

I have already called attention to the fact that the ideas of gods incarnating themselves in human forms and of men becoming gods, are not new ideas in the world. On the contrary, the oriental world from the earliest times has been full of such ideas, floating nebulously in the minds of men. Indeed, there was hardly one of the oriental nations existing at the time of Jesus, but had its legends and popular beliefs of one or more of the gods coming down at some time or other and assuming the form of a man, and dwelling on earth.

Rawlinson in his *Herodotus* tells us that the Egyptians believed that their god Osiris had incarnated himself in human form and dwelt among them.

The Chinese have the popular belief that Lao-tse existed from all eternity, but descended to earth, was born of a virgin, lived a human life, and when his work of beneficence among men was done, ascended up bodily into heaven.

Brahmanism is full of the incarnation idea. Vishnu is believed to have been incarnated nine times.

I have spoken of the belief among the Buddhists that Buddha was an incarnation of God, and the belief in Thibet that the Grand Llamas or Pope Emperors of that country are all incarnations of God in human form.

In the Greek and Roman world, too, in the midst of which Christianity had its birth and early development, we find essentially the same thought everywhere. The

minds of the people were full of belief in gods whose forms were those of men; and also of men deified, or raised up to the condition of gods. The founders of Rome were deified and worshipped as gods. All the Roman emperors for a long period of time were raised to divine honors. Suetonius tells us that the people fully believed in the divinity of Julius Cæsar. Marcus Aurelius was still worshipped in the time of Diocletian. Antinous was adored in Egypt a century after his death. From Cæsar to Constantine sixty persons in all were deified. Constantine was doubly deified; he was apotheosized by the pagans and canonized by Christians, and coins were stamped having on them a monogram signifying Jesus, Mary, Constantine; all three seemingly being put on a level as equally divine.

Here, then, we have a picture of the thought of the age — and of the religious beliefs of the age — in which Jesus appeared, and in which Christianity began its career in the world.

Thus we see that the incarnation idea was not something unknown, something that can be accounted for only by supposing that God did actually come to earth and dwell in human form in Jesus. On the contrary, it was a common idea, entertained among many peoples, and in many forms, familiar at the time of the rise of Christianity to everybody in the Roman world. What is more natural than that in such an age Jesus too should have been lifted up to divine honors, as well as so many others? An age that could deify Grecian lawgivers and Roman emperors, why should it not deify Jesus? An age that could believe in incarnations of gods in animal forms (as in the sacred bull of Egypt), and in human forms (as in Buddha, Lao-tse, Osiris, and Krishna), — what more natural than that such an age, as time went on and the real human Jesus faded into the background,

should, little by little, speculate itself into the notion that he too was an incarnation of God.

Moreover we must not forget that the Christians who were converts from Judaism, from the very first identified Jesus with the being whom the Jews expected would come as their Messiah. But the popular notion of the Messiah was that he was going to be a man who in some way would possess supernatural power,—a king who would set up an earthly and yet a supernatural kingdom. Right here, then, in this attempt of his earthly followers to make him fulfil the vague, speculative, and supernaturalistic messianic idea, we have the first step toward making Jesus a god.

Then came surging in upon this all the Gnostic and Neoplatonic and oriental philosophical speculation of the time, full of these ideas of incarnations which I have been describing. And finally the Christians were brought into contact all the while with a government which raised its emperors into objects of worship. Where, then, is there anything strange in the thought that the Christians should have soon come to think of their master also as a divine being—a god incarnated in human form—or a man by his purity of life and suffering elevated to be a god?

Surely nothing could have been more natural. All religious doctrines are more or less the outgrowth of their age. What doctrine concerning Jesus and God could have been more exactly and perfectly the child of the age in which Christianity had its origin and early history, than this doctrine that Jesus was God? And such a doctrine once distinctly formulated and incorporated into the creeds of the church, of course would stoutly and long hold its place against no matter how much of new light. And so we have this doctrine as a part of all the confessions and creeds of so-called Orthodox Christendom to-day.

But enough. I have now answered as well as a single discourse will allow, the questions with which I set out — Was Jesus God? And, How did he come to be worshipped?

Just a word more in closing.

Are there any here who say to me that in undertaking, as I have done this evening, to show that Jesus was a man and not God, I am dishonoring Jesus, and tearing down the time-honored religious belief of a large part of the Christian world?

To the first of these charges, I can only reply again as in the beginning of my discourse: No, I deny that it dishonors Jesus — rather do I affirm that it lifts him up into the truest honor — to insist on his humanity, and to refuse to wrap the garments of a fictitious deity about him. As God he is petty, insignificant, pitiful. But as a man, words are too poor to express the grandeur and greatness of his nature. As a deity, he fades away into a shadowy myth. As a man, he is the most real, living, and influential character in history, — the topmost, finest flower on the tree of our great humanity.

As to the second charge, that I am tearing down that which to many is a cherished belief, I reply: Yes, in a sense I am, just as I should be tearing down a belief which many cherish if I urged that Buddha or the Virgin Mary are not proper objects of worship. But is there no justification? Is truth not to be spoken unless all men assent to it? I simply tear down a great, hurtful superstition, that grew up in a dark and credulous age, and has ever since cast its shadow across the face of God, robbing him of his honor, hiding him from sight, and dividing Christendom into warring sects.

The real work that Jesus did in his day was to reveal God, — to reveal him more clearly than any other great religious teacher or prophet had ever done. Alas, that

men in their superstitious and mistaken zeal should have lifted him into the place of God — the creature into the place of the Creator — the one who taught men to pray to his Father and ours, up to the throne of the universe, himself to be prayed to; thus making of him instead of a revealer of God, a concealer, a usurper of God's place! Do we shrink from worshipping idols? How then can we consent to take a created being, no matter if he be the pure, wise, noble Jesus, and raising him aloft in our imaginations, bow down in worship before him, instead of bowing in worship always and only before the God above him and above us all, up to whom he never failed humbly and earnestly to point his followers?

No, friends, I do not touch thoughtlessly or rashly any religious belief held sincerely by any human being. I do not pull down except to build better. I only say to men, "Do not worship Jesus," in order that I may the more emphatically and earnestly say, "Worship him whom Jesus worshipped, and taught men everywhere to join with him in worshipping, as our common Father in Heaven."

Tenderly let us love Jesus; sincerely let us honor him; gladly and gratefully let us sit at his feet, to learn wisdom from his gracious lips and his matchless life. But let us not follow in the path of the ancient pagan peoples and deify the man we would honor, even if that man be the great and incomparable Galilean. Rather let us be his so true and faithful disciples, that, in all worship, we shall be pointed by him ever to *his Father and our Father, to his God and our God!*

Words are inadequate to paint the evil results that have come to religion and the world from the deification of Jesus. It was this that brought into the Christian Church the reign of creeds and dogmas which for so many centuries has blighted Christianity, and which, alas!

is far from over yet. So long as Jesus remained a man, the aim of his followers was to love him and follow him in deeds of helpfulness and mercy. When he became a god, all minds turned to the task of framing right theories about him; and woe to any who dared to think differently from the opinion of the majority. Thus Christianity became changed from love to belief, from conduct to speculation, from a life to a theology, — with the inevitable consequences of divisions, strifes, heresies, endless multiplication of sects, hatreds, religious wars, persecutions, untold bloodshed.

When will these evils pass away? Never, until their cause is removed. Jesus the god has always been, not only a usurper of his father's throne, but a sower of seed of endless speculation, contention, and strife among men. But Jesus the man — the man whose teaching and life were love and helpfulness — has always been an influence in the world for love and peace. And so in the nature of the case it must always be.

It is plain then that the salvation of Christianity lies in going back from the deified Christ of the creeds and the theologies to the loving, living human Jesus of the Gospels.

It is hopeful that already in many quarters the cry is being raised, Back to Jesus! the *real* Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, the Golden Rule, the two great Commandments, and the incomparable Parables! And well may this cry be heard, because this means back from fiction to truth, back from mythology to reality, back from creed to deed, back from speculation to love, back from division and strife to unity and peace.

And such a going back as this means *going forward*, — forward to such an *advance as Christianity has never known*.

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UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of Its Origin and Development

By **George Willis Cooke**, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; price, \$1.50 *net*; postage, 18 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

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THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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BY

PROF. FRANCIS A. CHRISTIE.



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THE UNITARIAN VANTAGE-GROUND.

THE most gratuitous form of mistake is prophecy, said George Eliot. Equally hazardous, perhaps, is the effort which a man makes to look abroad over his own age and measure the power and importance of any of its forces. Nevertheless I have been asked by you to speak of the place of Unitarianism among the forces of the age, and the difficulties of profoundly grasping a whole complex world of relations does not deter me from accepting your invitation. A partial comprehension is better than none at all, and it is a step to complete insight. I am willing, therefore, to contribute my partial understanding of a problem which will only be solved when men look back upon our time as something clearly differentiated from its before and after.

It is obvious that our hopes and imaginations outrun our numbers. When we look back over history, we have cause to be supremely indifferent to the numerical test. Those whom humanity reveres and idolizes in the story of morals and religion have always been in the minority in their own day, and the larger biological survey of life assures us that the forward step has been not simultaneous drift of the mass, but the variation of the individual, or the few from the general type. At any given time unreason has been able to count its majorities, and the orthodox Protestant who calls attention to the poverty of Unitarian statistics would get

small comfort by comparing Protestant Christianity and Buddhism. The main thing is to be sure that the truth is in us, and then if we have faith that humanity in the end adjusts itself to truth, we may be sure that in after times we shall look back upon our little company with a supreme regard. An orthodox friend of mine told me once that the place of Unitarians was that of pioneers in religion. Well, who would not be a pioneer? I fancied that I heard in my friend's word an envious longing for spiritual pioneering. The interesting thing is that in spiritual things like art and science and religion the pioneer and his band are the only ones that are much valued later. When men look back, the rest are counted then simply as survivals of older time, mere representatives of an earlier thought. The new spiritual ideal of the pioneer is even called the distinctive thing, the defining thing, because it was humanity's new forward movement that made the age distinguishable from the older past.

Mr. Claude Phillips has recently declared the typical character of the nineteenth century to have been a new ideal of truth, heroic in fearless sincerity as in all-embracing sympathy. It sounds very much as if he were speaking of Unitarianism, with its fearlessly sincere relinquishment of hampering traditional doctrine and its generous humanitarianism in ethical interest. Possibly, then, we may lay the flattering unction to our souls that Unitarianism, in spite of its numerical inferiority, has been the characteristic expression in religion of the spirit of nineteenth-century life. There is all the more ground for appealing to this student of culture, when we find him saying further that the century just past was distinguished by its worship of humanity as it is, by its effort to find in man, whatever his wretchedness of condition, an expression of the supremely highest being :

the word made flesh. There, surely, we have Channing's one sublime idea, the dignity of human nature. There, surely, we have the Unitarian repudiation of the old doctrine of a totally corrupt spiritual nature in man, and its utter spiritual hopelessness before a "holy violence" should be wrought upon it by arbitrary divine operations without it. There is then a unison between the highest modern intuition about human life and the distinctive religious tenet of our modern forward movement in religion. I say our distinctive tenet — for the New England liberalism began not as a doctrine of the divine unity but as a doctrine of human nature. The distinctive and the permanent principle of our company is an affirmation of the highest spiritual capacity of man. It is that principle which has emancipated us from the horrible doctrine of divine enmity to sinners as preached by Edwards and his followers. It is that principle which has enabled us to grasp and preach the sublime affirmations of the historical Jesus concerning the divine fatherhood. It is that principle which has emancipated us from narrow and superstitious views of a mechanical revelation to incompetent human intelligences. It is that principle which has led us to look with sympathy and kindness on the world-wide manifestations of religion under whatever name. It is that principle which has enabled us to cherish religion in close harmony with the interests of culture and social progress. It is that principle which has enabled us to view Jesus Christ as the supreme instance of spiritual capacity among men, and to draw from him religious inspiration and illumination and fervor without alienating him from the ranks of humanity. Given our central doctrine of the nature and capacity of the human spirit as so far akin to the divine that always in every enactment of good it is recipient of the divine life, so far

akin to God that its own ideal conception of itself in the symbol of fatherhood is a revelation of the character of the God who made us; from that doctrine, I say, all the rest of Unitarianism follows as corollary and result. It is an ultimate question, then, that divides us from orthodoxy, — the question of the relation of the human spirit to God. In a sense it may be said that we aim to assert for human nature what the older churches have strictly limited to the case of Jesus. For him they have maintained a perfect kinship and association of the divine and the human, but they have been so governed by a sceptical distrust of the human nature as to deny to men at large that direct access to God which was claimed for Jesus alone, and even in his case the constant tendency of that distrust was to conceive his humanity as wholly absorbed in his deity. Now, I wish to set forth before you that the whole Protestant world is finding itself subject to a critical historical revision of its system of doctrine and that this profoundly effective historical study is revealing the fact that the exclusive deification of Jesus was not the pure result of a religious insight, or of scientific analysis, but the result of mixed and confused historical tendencies, — a thing, then, not of absolute and final value but of mere historical relativity, bound to pass away when the conditions that generated and maintained it pass away. Religious conviction cannot remain staked on a thing historically relative and contingent, and modern religion therefore begins to admit or profess that the essence of the Christian religion is not to be found in the conception of Christ's nature which was so long made the cardinal feature of the Christian system. Once the law of the Roman empire made common denial of the Trinitarian doctrine liable to banishment, while teachers of anti-Trinitarian heresy were threatened with death. Now

the Protestant world is accustomed to see the Trinitarian doctrine either treated with cold apology or set quite in the background. Let me have your patience while I state the history of the case in outline.

History makes clear that about the year 200 the view which we call orthodox was the view of only a few. Let us confine our attention to the city of Rome. There were three competing views there. In the first place there was an earnest and learned body of Christians who plainly and seriously looked upon Jesus as a man, a man empowered to do great things and to teach great truths by a gift of spiritual power from God. The Holy Spirit was for them an impersonal divine energy, a divine operation. It was given to Jesus at his baptism, and a further gift of divine help raised him from death to the world of God. For them the story of Jesus was the story of a saintly man specially aided by God, and the Christian life was in their conception a life in which every believer received similar divine power in baptism, and at the end a like resurrection. Jesus was thus the first-born among many brethren, but there was no abandonment of the human rank. Now, from about 190 these Christians were not recognized as sound by the others in Rome. They were disfellowshipped by the Roman bishop. On what ground? On grounds that we should call orthodox? Far from it. The sympathies of two successive Roman bishops, Victor (189-198) and Zephyrinus (199-217), were given to another view which is called Modalism. This view is an uncritical deification of Jesus. A people who were accustomed to deify rulers and whose minds were familiar with pagan stories of gods appearing in human form had little difficulty and great inducement to simply accept Jesus as God. Only, to save Monotheism, they identified Jesus with the one only God. Father and Son were only names

for different modes of manifestation. Jesus was simply God in the flesh, — God descending to earth in human form. The humanity of Jesus was merely the human body of flesh. For some twenty-eight years this essentially pagan view was favored by the Roman bishops, though the first group which I have mentioned felt that they had the gospels on their side and had an organization and a bishop of their own. In 217 Callistus came to the bishopric of the main group. His sympathy had been with the view called Modalism, but he had to encounter now a vigorous opposition from some whose leaning was to a third conception. This third conception was the first form of that which later became orthodox. It was the view of men who conceived the world as a philosophical problem. How explain the multiplicity of finite and conditioned things from the absolute one? The problem was solved for these men by the aid of a notion begun in pagan Greek philosophy and developed by Alexandrian Jews independently of the Christian movement and even prior to it. It was the notion that from the Absolute Being — from the unconditional and unknowable being — had gone forth an uttered thought to be a second and subordinate representative of the Divine Being. This operative thought or Logos had made the world and the human beings in the world. These philosophic Christians were anxious to establish their monotheistic religion by the guarantee of revelation and they argued that this subordinate Logos personality had found full utterance in Jesus. To call Jesus the Jewish Messiah no longer had meaning in Rome or Carthage. To call his teaching the teaching of Logos gave it the rank of the highest revelation in the finite world according to this theory of the world's origin and government. Now, to reconcile vigorous adherents of this view, the new bishop Callistus in 217

made some cautious concessions. He used the term *Logos*, and his use of this terminology gave a sanction to that Christology which had the support of the highest scientific or philosophical theory of the world current among educated Christians. From that time on the great influence of the Roman Church was given to this *Logos* doctrine which viewed Jesus as a human agent or incarnation, not of God himself, not of God the absolute, but of this second and subordinate personality who was supposed to be necessary in order to solve the problem of the origin of the finite from the infinite, of the many from the one. This *Logos* view won a signal victory about 270, over the older view of Jesus as a man divinely helped. Then a great bishop of Antioch was condemned for what we may call his Unitarian view, and a pagan Roman emperor decided that the church property in Antioch should belong to those who were recognized by the Christian bishop of Rome. After that the terms and phrases of the *Logos* view were inserted into the simple baptismal creeds of the churches, and the foundations were laid for that development of dogma which found fullest expression in the Council of Chalcedon in 451, and which is the rightful orthodox conception of Christian history. I do not need to go into the story at more length, nor to narrate the changes and important corrections which were made in it. It is enough to have pointed out that the whole orthodox view of Christ, the whole Trinitarian conception which is applied to Him, is seen by the historian to have been the gradual ascendancy of one view over at least two others, and that the victorious view was fundamentally due to an explanation of the universe which no longer finds any scientific or philosophical support. From the beginning, Protestantism has been undoing that victory, for Protestantism has always had playing upon it the great new modern

phase of philosophy which seeks to explain the world without resolving the unity of the divine personality, and does not feel the need of stating the two ideas of God transcending the world and God immanent in the world as two persons in God. Moreover, Protestantism has been undoing that ancient victory of an outworn philosophy because it has tried to state its doctrines by the aid, not of such speculation, but by the aid of religious psychology; and the psychology of religion deals simply with the mysterious fact of man communing with God and aided by God in a mood of worship and reverent submission which is wholly different from metaphysical speculation, and therefore as worship, as religion, knows nothing of that metaphysics which was applied to the nature of Christ. More and more, too, Protestant religion gains the correction of a comparative survey of religion beyond the Christian limits, and is obliged by such instances and comparisons to see the marvellous and precious influence of Jesus in the light of an historic mediation of one who, because he loved righteousness and hated iniquity, was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, and one who, thus exemplifying man's moral personality in its most tragic experience, interprets and inspires our lives with the interpretation of the highest human instance and the inspiration of his highest purity and love.

Now, this historical criticism of the Christian doctrine, produced in the ancient world, and long carried on as inheritance and tradition, this historical criticism with its exhibition of inadequacies and relativities, is in general the work of men who are not affiliated with our organization of Unitarian churches. It is the work of scholars in Germany and France and Holland, who are simply to be described as the scientific and liberal members of churches which have not, as church institutions,

adopted the Unitarian position. Their work is not so much an expression of Unitarianism as an independent confirmation of it. Under the leadership of such eminent students of religion we find Protestantism in general in a wavering and experimental attitude. The question is simply what position will be adopted when the tradition of the Logos doctrine is laid aside. Will it be the ancient modalist view, which sacrifices the humanity of Jesus, except so far as a mere human body was concerned? That would be to sever the possibility of man and the manifestation of God more than Orthodoxy ever did; and yet this position is somewhat confusedly assumed by men like Lyman Abbott. But so long as religion remains, it always has tendencies of its earliest and first creative form. We may be sure that as it more and more frankly lays aside the incumbrance of the speculations imposed late upon its first simplicity, Christianity will revert to that which was the view of Jesus and his first Galilean followers, and that was Unitarianism. True, it was expressed in forms that belonged to an early age and Oriental people, but the forms are easily translated. True, it was shaped to meet other historical issues, but its fundamental principles persist for us. It is Unitarianism in its inspiring estimate of man. It is Unitarianism in its interpretation of the character of God by man's highest conception of his own character. It is Unitarianism by its unmodified assertion of a single personality in God and by its singleness of emphasis upon the religious expression of that personality. It is Unitarianism, too, in its passion for human welfare and human brotherhood and for the control of life by the saving and redeeming aim of a kingdom or family of men who live as pure and loving sons of a Father who is holiness and love.

I am arguing in outline that our Unitarian churches

have assumed a position in religion which proves to be a successful pioneer position from which they can see the leaders of the rest moving to join them. Wherever Unitarian churches are really known, and have manifested to the community their possession of religious earnestness and ability in their conditions of natural freedom and of the simplicity of faith which is essential to religion, they win more and more the adherence and sympathy of thoughtful neighbors. It is our natural desire to see a great extension of our form of religious faith, and we are justly impatient of the conservatism which prevents so many from leaving the old associations which have lost their power and finding a full, free play for themselves in our happy household of faith. When I ask myself what things will work for a larger and speedy extension of Unitarianism as the recognized true form of an enlightened Christianity, I find myself always led to three prescriptions. The first of these concerns all of us. The second concerns some of us. The last, perhaps, lies beyond the control of us all. The first specific counsel of a means for commending Unitarianism to all the world is that we shall find in it and show through it a full religious satisfaction of human needs. Our first impulse when we break away from an erroneous system in religion is simply to show its errors of assertions, and thus to gain an intellectual victory over it. That has its place, but it is not all. We must gain a religious victory over it. We must show that our new system in religion provides for the sin and misery and sorrow of men a help as rich and richer than our old church had to offer. If I did not find that Unitarianism really met these needs of the soul, I should suspect it of being a deficient form of religion. I have not found it so deficient. The cure of all human griefs and failure is God; and in becoming a Unitarian I entered into an

assurance of God as coming into vital union with my human life with an infinite wealth of love and an infinite power and readiness to use my human capacities in his gift of Himself. I won the assurance that He, who moment by moment spoke to me through the power of ideals essential to my own being, and who never withdrew the challenge and solicitation of those ideals, had for my needs the constant forgiveness of a restoring sympathy and love and the constant and eternal care for my being which was my ground for an inward triumph over all calamities and death. I am sure that we all find such assurances, and I mean to plead only that we should proclaim these religious assurances to others with evangelistic fervor, so that none may have cause to think that our churches are only a refuge for troubled reason without the spiritual comfort enjoyed in the old religious home. And when we express these values of our Unitarian religion we shall have done a great service to it; we shall do what the Methodist or the Salvationist has done to evidence his church as one of the vital religious forces of the age.

In the second place, I wish to plead for a higher sense of responsibility to theological science. It should be felt as our duty to conduct with the amplest learning and the most patient toil of criticism and discussion the scientific study of religion that shall clearly disentangle from the great complex of past usages and feelings and conceptions that which is the essential and germinative principle of our religious evolution. It should be our delightful privilege to lead the way to new statements and new valuations of old religious ideas in the light of this permanent essence of the religious movement. That would be the performance of our highest duty to the rest of our Christian brethren; for, tenacious as men are of old and sacred convictions, they need to arrive at new

forms of conviction by a full and convincing argument which is associated in every detail with the elaborate process of their reverent and conservative study. It is our sacred duty to them, for we would not be saved alone. We crave as much as any a spiritually unified society. We aim at a truth which justifies itself to all minds. Only by elaborating this intellectual and learned task of transforming the common religious inheritance can we escape the fate of some of the minor sects, — the fate of standing aloof from general society of religious culture with a few shibboleths which we simply cry aloud without an adequate and convincing interpretation. Such a scientific process centres naturally in a theological school, and surely there can be no better conditions for the preparation of our ministers than the scene of such generous and laborious investigation. As a representative of the only theological school under Unitarian control, I plead for your hearty support of it in its highest ambitions. I beg you to sympathize with the view that such a Unitarian theological school will never have reached its proper stature until it has become the acknowledged leader of liberal schools, and exercises a powerful constraint, not simply upon those that resort to it, but upon every other school in the land.

And now I wish to refer, lastly, to conditions which may hereafter spread Unitarianism more widely in the form of organized fellowship, but which are conditions hardly within our control. When we survey the Protestantism of older lands, it certainly does not seem that the continuance of its older forms of doctrine and practice is due to any preponderance of conviction. We have to remember that in Germany and England the churches are established churches, and that the government of those lands is in the hands of conservative classes. Political conservatism, resisting all modifications in the

social whole, is the powerful support of an ancient Orthodoxy which could hardly maintain any social eminence without it. Could we foresee that the political future of those lands carried with it the disestablishment of the churches, I am confident in my prophecy that among the sweeping religious readjustments, which would insure one of the most striking changes, would be the emergence of organized religious liberalism with which we could affiliate, and which, being now rid of all external constraints of compromise, would be frankly and explicitly of our form of thought and expression. It is only the instinct of political unity which binds conservative and liberal in one religious establishment; and whenever the political factor is eliminated, men will certainly follow nature, and seek to walk together only as they are agreed. That result is the American result of denominations; and I am fain to believe that all the suppressed liberalism of the two most eminent lands in Protestant Europe would exhibit itself in a denomination of the greatest learning and most effective social influence.

That, you will say, is not our time, but the future. It is true; but for that or for any event we have a duty which is present. It is our duty to become internationally known, and to gather into closest sympathy all the liberal elements that to-day are willing to brave the frown and disfavor of authority and fashion. We have already begun such an enterprise. We are stepping out of our isolation, and are cultivating international relations. In 1900, at the anniversary of the American Unitarian Association in Boston, there was formed an international council of Unitarian and other liberal religious thinkers and workers. In May, 1901, meetings were held in London by the invitation of this international council, and a series of notable and inspiring

addresses were made, not only by men from America and England, who are connected with churches called Unitarian, but by representatives of Liberalism in France, Italy, Switzerland, Hungary, Scandinavia, Holland, Germany, and Russia. The success of that great series of meetings was such that we may prepare ourselves to see a great international religious fellowship arise, in which with many differences of organization and administration there will be a spiritual unity of faith and ideals more impressive than the inherited Catholicism, which maintains its unity by a system of coercion and authority and suppression of the free, inquiring mind. The next session of the council will be held on the continent in September, 1903. Who knows but that out of such meetings of men united by the free adoption of the same ethical and religious principles great issues may come? Certainly for us these meetings are a supreme gratification. They make plain to all that our American Unitarianism is not a small local eccentricity, but something for which the rational mind of all lands reaches out, something which is universal and human in its range of adaptability, something which is so simply and widely true to human nature that it can override all limits of nationality and language. Who knows, too, that this international union of spiritual religion may not act as a leaven for the ethical life of all lands? Let me close by the utterance of this great hope in the words of an eloquent Russian, who is active in translating Unitarian literature for circulation in his own land: "Unitarianism has in the past rendered humanity so enormous a service toward the unification of religion by liberating universal truth from the net of irrational and mutually antagonistic superstitions it was entangled in that one naturally longs to see Unitarianism in the future render in the domain of feeling the same service it has hitherto rendered in

the sphere of reason, by participation in the levelling of all those egotistical barriers which prevent men from behaving toward other men as the children of one Heavenly Father inevitably would if only they did indeed realize the brotherhood which unites them."

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Size, 5 1-4 x 7 5-8; pages, 394; price, 75 cents *net*; postage, 11 cents.

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; 21 full-page illustrations; price, \$2.00 *net*; postage, 14 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post-office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

In addition to the text itself are twenty-one full-page half-tone portrait illustrations of prominent Unitarian leaders, including a frontispiece of Channing. These grouped pictures add not a little to the general interest of the volume.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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THE COMMON FAITH.

BY

REV. SAMUEL M. CROTHERS, D.D.



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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

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“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

APR 12 1917

THE COMMON FAITH.

That I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. — ROMANS i. 12.

ONE of the most pleasant memories which I have of the convention of the Unitarian and other liberal religious thinkers and workers in London is that of a Russian gentleman who gave in very simple fashion his own experience. He had been born into the Greek Church and surrounded by its influences. He had been thrown among people who took certain things in regard to religion for granted. He told us how there came a time when he doubted this faith of his companions and of the society in which he lived. He asked himself, Does the Church as it is to-day represent the ideal of Christ, or may it not be that there has been a mistake? And the more he thought, the more a few simple truths came before his mind. These things, he said to himself, constitute the essence of religion. The dogmas I have received are no longer real to me. Then the interesting part of his confession came. He said that when he made this discovery of the simplicity of the religious life, there suddenly came the thought that he was going mad. "Could it be possible that, of all men living and who had lived for the last eighteen hundred years, I was the only one to understand Christ correctly?" It was madness, he thought, for him to set his individual opinion against all the wisdom and experience of the world. Then he told

of the relief that came when some of our liberal religious literature fell into his hands. Suddenly to him in his loneliness there appeared a great multitude. It was not madness; he was not standing out against the world. There were others who had been thinking as he thought and who had come to substantially the same belief. Thus, he said, the assurance of sanity came to him.

It seems a little strange that a man coming to a belief that is perfectly simple and in itself altogether rational should think of it as a premonition of madness. And yet that is the way great multitudes of people who are thinking their way to any clearer truth alone must feel, do feel. We are hardly conscious of how much we are dependent for our peace of mind on continual contact with the thought of those around us. In our daily life, so far as our ordinary business is concerned, it is very seldom that we have to stand altogether alone and declare an individual conviction against the consciousness of our neighbors, and we do well to doubt ourselves when thus we stand alone. The man in business, when he asks what is practical, is, in fact, all the time consulting with his neighbors; he is closely in touch with the business world; he knows what people are thinking about, what they are likely to do, and he feels content in that knowledge. So in our social life. We are continually talking about all the little things that happen to us. We are comparing our individual standard of propriety with the standards of those about us. Some one has given us the very apt phrase, "the common sense of the crowd," and we do well to doubt ourselves when we fall too far apart from that judgment. We are seeing what other people are seeing, and we are continually correcting ourselves by our neighbor's vision.

Now the aim of a church, of a religious association, is to do for us religiously what the ordinary associations of

society do for us in other matters. It is to give us an opportunity to compare our best thoughts with the best thought of others, and by this continual conference to come to those things which commend themselves to the spiritual nature of man. Out of all conflicts of opinion certain great truths must emerge, and they must become permanent simply because they continue to commend themselves to the spiritual consciousness of humanity. That is the ideal aim of a religious organization, and it is that expressed in the words of Paul, — “That I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other’s faith, both yours and mine.”

If we could get a full, frank expression of what people are actually believing and what they are actually desiring, there would be comfort and strength for every one of us. But just here, because it in one way answers a universal need, has come the great danger of all religious organizations, and that which makes it necessary in these days for us to work for a larger and freer organization than that which we have had in the past. Long ago priests discovered this fact of human nature, that a man is not fully satisfied with his own thought till it has been confirmed by the thought of others. Upon this human need all the great schemes of priestcraft and churchcraft that have held the human mind in bondage have been formed, sometimes consciously, more often unconsciously. You cannot compel a man to think as you will. Thought is an interior thing, and must be free. The Inquisition itself could not compel a man to believe anything. But what can be done is to prohibit a man from freely expressing his doubts, or any convictions which are in opposition to a current creed. You must think as you will: we cannot prevent that, but you may *speak* as we will. Let your private convictions be what they may, when you come together to express your

common thought, then you must speak in some approved form of words. That is all the ecclesiastic asks of men.

Now what happens? If the thinking man finds his individual conviction and his individual way of looking at things in opposition to this required public expression of faith, will his own thought grow to maturity while he yields formal acquiescence to an alien opinion? No; the private thought is stifled because of its lack of expression. In the time of need the man doubts himself. It seems more likely that he should be mistaken than that the great mass of good people about him should be mistaken. Said Mrs. Browning, "Men get opinions as boys learn to read, by repetition chiefly." I think we have all found it to be true that in an emergency it is the thing which voices the common aspiration, and that has had some public expression, that comes with a power and definiteness.

If we ask why it is that in the face of the whole intellectual tendency of our times, in the face sometimes of absolute proof to the contrary, certain beliefs discredited by thought still hold their place in the religious consciousness of the great mass of the people, we must answer: It is because the great mass of people have been taught that the use of individual reason, when it leads to doubt, is of the nature of sin. A man always feels that, unless he has had opportunity to confer freely and frankly with some other mind. I remember very well how after a long struggle I was conscious that I no longer believed my inherited creed. I knew that perfectly well. I was troubled by it, felt that it was something wrong in myself, hated to confess it frankly to another. It seemed as if in some way I had been cut off from the great company of believing, worshipping people throughout the world. Then one day I happened to speak frankly with

a friend about it. I found, to my surprise, that he thought very much as I did. It was nothing peculiar to myself, and after I had expressed my worst heresies they seemed very mild to him. After all, it was not so bad as I thought. And I continually meet persons who are in just that state, distrusting their own best thought, treating it as if it were in the nature of sin.

Now the aim of a truly liberal church is precisely the opposite of that type of church which I have mentioned. Instead of seeking some way by which all men's minds may be conformed to one type, its aim is to so free the mind that men shall talk together just as simply, as naturally, as fully, about the questions of religion as about the questions of every-day life, that there shall be one place where they may confer together, where a man shall be no more ashamed of expressing his doubt or his difference of opinion than he shall of expressing his agreement. And the possibility of unity lies in this, that there are certain great truths which men do see and at heart believe. If we could just come together and express our individual opinions we should be confirmed in our real religious life. Now it is very easy to say this, but I doubt very much whether even in our most liberal churches people realize the full ideal. It is so easy to fall back upon the other principle, that of some sort of authority. Tolstoy tells of a Russian proprietor who had given himself with whole-hearted devotion to the work of uplifting the peasants on his estates. And then he tells how when this man tried to carry out his new thought, instead of being met with gratitude, he was met with suspicion. They wanted to know what ulterior end he had in view; and it took a long time before he gained their confidence. They thought they knew what a proprietor was, they thought they knew that there was always a selfish end, and that this man

was trying to do in a different way just what other men before had been trying to do.

I think that the very word "church," the very name "minister," the very thought of any expression of common faith, has to a great multitude of minds associations which are hostile to the whole idea of liberty. "New presbyter is but the old priest writ large," so Milton said, and men to-day are saying very much the same thing of every attempt at a freer religious organization. There needs to be "line upon line, and precept upon precept," before the ideal of a really free church can be fulfilled. It is very common for people when they meet a minister of religion, of no matter what denomination, to think that he is a person who is very easily shocked by the expression of a difference of opinion. So there is a certain defiant tone in which the man of the world expresses his own individual opinion. I remember meeting in a little town a man who, when he learned that I was a minister, immediately assumed this attitude, and said, "I, sir, am a Buddhist." And then he waited a long time for me to express my disapprobation. For some reason or another he seemed to think that his profession of faith must seem very reprehensible to the ministerial mind. When I conversed with him a little time, I found that what he really meant was that he had ceased to be a Presbyterian.

How many of us have certain theological bugbears! A professor of theology used to have one argument by which he answered all disturbing questions: "Young men, if you follow that line of thought you will find that it leads to materialism, pantheism, atheism, and universal scepticism." It is through such fear of the extremes to which any line of thought may lead that many people are kept from thinking at all. It is dangerous. We express a desire for some new enterprise or association. That, says the cautious man, leads to "Socialism." We express

a desire for more self-reliance, for more individual initiative, for more freedom from repressive government; that leads, on the other hand, to "Anarchy." It is doubtless true that absolute individualism is Anarchy; but the sensible man is in no danger of following his principle to any such conclusion. The principle of association may be carried to an extreme that leaves no room for individual initiative, but the sensible man is likely to stop far short of that. Society is a balance between opposing forces.

Pantheism, atheism, agnosticism, materialism, pessimism, — how many ugly, dangerous words there are in the dictionary, and how many young men imagine that they have all these spiritual diseases when, as a matter of fact, they are only in the way of normal spiritual development. A man comes to say of certain things that are mysterious, of which he thought he knew, "I don't know." Then he labels himself or allows himself to be labelled an "Agnostic." No religious life for him. Another man sees that the great God cannot stand apart from his universe, but must be working in it and through it all. He labels himself "Pantheist," or is so labelled. Another man suddenly discovers the abyss of actual woe in the world, the evil that, for the present at least, is without remedy. He is called a "Pessimist." Another man looks to the right hand and to the left hand, and for the time he sees not God. The final word for him is "Atheist." Now we cannot have a free expression of what people from time to time are actually believing until we get over our fear of all such names. We must have a faith that is wholesome enough and large enough to keep us from being afraid of our own thought. The fact is that we are continually mistaking the passing moods of the spirit for the finalities of thought. These moods through which we pass have been familiar to the most profoundly religious minds.

To believe in God, — do you think that means that at every moment of your life your faith should be stronger than your doubt? Was Jesus an atheist when upon the cross he cried: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"? So dark it was at that moment that for him God was not. It was but the passing cloud. When the cloud passed, — "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." Do you think that those who have loved men most, sacrificed themselves for men most gladly, have always seen the worth and dignity of mankind? Do you think they have never had their moments of blank despair? The whole literature of religion is full of expressions of despondency, but the religious man is the man who at his best, when the clouds are off his soul, believes and does not despair. If we could take the religious life naturally, simply, instead of labelling people as this or that, as if it were a final thing, we should say: "Here is a man struggling, working, doubting, seeking some truth. Let us ask only for the best thing he has found. This is his contribution to the faith and life of humanity." You find your friends and companions and helpers everywhere throughout the world, not in churches alone, but among all men who have truly striven and truly attained to any measure of peace and life.

And then, just another thing: If we are to have a true expression of the religious life, we must not only free ourselves from the fear of heresy and of doubt, but we must free ourselves also from the fear of worldliness and indifference and scorn. There are certain spiritual faiths and aspirations which we all have, each one in the sanctuary of his own soul, but which we doubt whether our neighbors have. We all of us are more religious than our actions or our words would indicate. We know the faith that comes to us, but we do not know that the

same power and the same strength is in our neighbors. It is so much easier for all of us to express a flippant opinion in society than it is to express a serious opinion. It is very much easier to express a worldly thought than it is a spiritual thought. And so when a person in some time of need feels the impulse of spiritual faith and desire, he is lonely: he feels that there is nothing in the thought of other men to answer to his own. This is what Matthew Arnold expressed in that poem on "The Buried Life," which is so true to every human experience, —

"I knew the mass of men concealed
Their thoughts, for fear that if revealed
'They would by other men be met
With blank indifference, or with blame reproved.
I knew they lived and moved
Tricked in disguises, alien to the rest
Of men, and alien to themselves."

In such disguises every one of us has passed a great part of life. No wonder that men fall into spiritual despair; and the way out of it comes for most of us when we touch the real sources of emotion in others.

"When our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
When our world-deafened ear
Is by the tones of a loved voice caress'd,
A bolt is shot back somewhere in the breast,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again."

It is for this that we come together, it is for this that we speak our heart's faith: because it is true that the very best development of the human soul can come to no man alone. His faith in spiritual realities is never serenely confident until it is confirmed by the response which comes from another.

That which is to triumph is not your faith alone, nor mine alone, but each is "comforted by the other's faith, both yours and mine."

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Address communications and contributions to the

American Unitarian Association
25 BEACON STREET BOSTON, MASS.

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THE
GOSPEL OF A PERSONAL
GOD

BY

REV. HOWARD N. BROWN.



PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

THE GOSPEL OF A PERSONAL GOD.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.—MARK xvi. 15.

WHAT was that gospel, or “glad tidings,” which the first Christian disciples felt entitled and commissioned to proclaim to the inhabitants of all the earth? Was it any message which can be repeated by us to-day with profit to those who are willing to listen, and are we able to preach that gospel, or any good news of the same kind, with authority? Nowhere in early Christian writings is the gospel defined, though everywhere it is taken for granted that Christian believers know perfectly what it is. When anything stands clearly within the view of a large number of people, they do not take the trouble to describe it to each other. We of this later day, however, with reference to that original proclamation, are among those spoken of as being “far off”; and it is only by some kind of definition or description that we get a firm grasp upon the meaning of our Christian faith. Out of this necessity for defining, in some measure, the gospel to be preached, there have sprung, unhappily, endless bitter quarrels in the Church. But it does not seem as if this were any longer necessary when people have come to some real knowledge of the fundamental and essential elements of the gospel

message. No doubt there is plenty of room for disagreement as to what is fundamental and essential ; and, furthermore, no very elaborate knowledge of Christian history is required to convince one that many pagan ideas have to be cast out of the mind of Christendom before the real gospel of Christ can be seen and appreciated. But still it is true that those things over which men have fought in the past have been, for the most part, of secondary consequence ; and one likes to believe it possible so to set forth the essence of Christian truth that all men, hearing, shall say, "This is, indeed, good news which we would gladly receive as God's truth."

One of the greatest distinguishing marks of the gospel, as first preached to men, was its sense of the infinite worth of personality, both human and divine ; and, if we are at pains to consider a little what this signifies, we shall find one of the natural lines of cleavage between Christianity and Paganism, alike in the ancient and in the modern world. This belief in, or perhaps it is better to say this knowledge of, personality, as the supreme fact of existence, is shown in various ways to have been a vital part of the mind of Christ. God was to him not a mere force or influence or name for the totality of things, but a person whom he called the "Father in heaven." "My Father," "your Father," "our Father," he was forever saying ; and his teaching about God ascribes to him every attribute of personality with which we are familiar.

This does not imply that he thought of Deity as an individual, with a limited form, like our own bodily presence ; though, if he did so think, it is nothing concerning which we need be troubled. Some people

take it upon themselves to be either deeply horrified or much amused if any one to-day thinks of God as having the form and appearance of a venerable man, and yet that simple childlike faith may be ever so much nearer the truth than half the philosophical speculations of our time. For the child, however foolish its pictures of the Almighty, at least believes in a divine person. The philosopher, when he finds that he can make no mental image of the Infinite, too often surrenders the idea of personality altogether, as applied to Deity. Now every person is to our human understanding a fathomless mystery. No picture can be made of that inward spiritual being which each one calls himself. Yet, unless that human being be truly a person, as distinguished from a cunning piece of mechanism, and unless God be a limitless personality, not a mere endless stream of causation, this whole universe is, for our purposes, practically a hollow and heartless creation.

Again, Christ's sense of the value and significance of personality is shown to us by his regard for all mankind. The humblest human being was to him a child of God ; that is to say, was a being like God, a being to be regarded with something of the awe and reverence which we pay to the infinite Father of all souls. The only words of anger he ever uttered were addressed to those who "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men," to those who had no sense of the infinite riches contained in the human soul, to prevent them from casting it aside in disdain, if it happened to be somewhat stained and defaced by sin.

On whatever theory we interpret his action, it is certain that Christ died for men, and gave his life a voluntary sacrifice, not because he was filled with pity

for the suffering of a worthless human race, but because, as an old Christian hymn expresses it,

“Our souls condemned and dying
Were precious in his sight.”

It was no theologian, but our entirely dispassionate New England philosopher, Mr. Emerson, who said that Jesus Christ for the first time appreciated the full value of the soul of man ; and it would have been well for the Church if those who had the making of its theology could have seen with equal clearness this key to the great Master's mind and thought.

How Christ arrived at his estimate of the supreme worth of personality we may not be able to say. But we of this time may share something of that sense and feeling if we think of ourselves as the ultimate and highest product of God's work, so far as we know it in the outward universe, and realize a little of the vast expenditure of time and energy by means of which this result has been achieved. For what was the countless host of suns and worlds, filling celestial spaces above us, called into being? If we have courage to say that all this makes up the stage on which our immortal spirits, bearing their Creator's likeness, are brought into being, and trained for an endless life of union and communion with Him, then, in our sight also, these human spirits begin to assume priceless worth. And why should we not say this? No other end of creation half so reasonable can be posited or assumed. In fact, creation has no final purpose whatever which our imagination can grasp, unless all its “groaning and travailing in pain,” through the countless ages, has been suffered in expectancy of the “manifestation of the sons of God.”

It may be that other worlds than ours are peopled by rational beings, living like us in hope of immortality. If so, then other solar systems do but repeat the plan and purpose of our own ; and the conviction is strengthened in our minds that all worlds exist to make a temporary home and abiding-place for free spirits like ourselves. And if we are troubled by the vast multitudes of beings, possibly gifted with the spark of immortal life, as if what had been produced in such countless throngs must be therefore cheap, or as if it puzzled us to explain why God should need or want so much companionship, let us make the forces of nature our parable, to teach us the depth and breadth of the infinite love. The force of gravitation, for example, holds no single atom with a grasp less firm because the sands of the seashore are countless and numberless. No matter how often this or any natural force may be drawn upon, it is as fresh and full in its last pulsation as when the morning stars sang together in the very dawn of time. There can be no weariness or satiety in an infinite love, though the objects of that love be increased throughout endless ages ; but to each one among millions the divine regard comes as new and strong as if that were its only child.

Let us think, then, that God, the infinite Person, cares for us who are created in his likeness as he cares for nothing else that he has made. Gold is precious in the sight of men because it has become the sum and the measure of all values. People fight for possession of that metal, they toil for it, and die in the search for it as for no other earthly substance known to them, because having that they can buy everything besides. In some such way ought we to value the supreme

spiritual fact of personal existence. That is the ultimate form and substance into which all spiritual riches are gathered up and coined,—the reality which holds and perpetuates all our blessings. Where there are good men and women, all things become possible; and, where there is little personal worth and power, there the richest gifts of nature lie barren and unutilized.

Now the proclamation that God and man stand together as persons, the transcendent realities of the whole universe, visible and invisible, is forever a proclamation of “good news,” if anybody can be made to see and believe that truth. No other tidings will the world receive with such acclaim when it begins to appreciate the significance of the message; and to no generation was this gospel ever preached whose need of it was greater than this present living and breathing world of which we make a part.

For one thing we human beings are, as we always have been, so hugely overmatched, physically, by the mighty frame of nature that without the gospel we are apt to be weighed into the very dust with a sense of our inferiority. It is sometimes said that the new astronomy has greatly reduced man’s sense of his own importance. Doubtless our larger ideas of the universe have produced some such result. Yet of old times the wonder and magnitude of the sky were great enough to lead one to exclaim, “When I consider the heavens, the moon and the stars, what is man that thou art mindful of him?” In the day when Christ’s gospel was first preached, it was difficult for humanity to put itself on anything like equal terms with that outward world whose mountains, winds, and seas so overtopped its own puny strength,

and whose volcanic upheavals recked so little, now and again, of the slaughter of thousands of human lives. We may admire the grandeur of Nature in her stormy moods, and love the beauty with which she clothes the earth in peaceful days ; but whenever self-consciousness puts, in contrast with all this, the physical image of ourselves, we are so small, our life is so frail and so quickly spent, that pity for our race is apt to swallow up all other sentiment.

One thing which Christ did for those who believed on him was to open a door of escape from nature into another realm where humanity can stand in spirit, with the whole of this huge world beneath its feet. He gave the soul courage and faith to say : "This earth was built for me. I am that single tenant placed within it as its rightful lord. It was not worth creating save as my dwelling-place, what time I am being schooled and prepared for an entrance to still higher spheres. Were it to be made a question whether this spiritual life of mine or the great sun in the heavens should be resolved back into nothingness, then it were better and more just that the flaming sun should cease to be, so that my soul might live."

The gospel of Christ gave men power and privilege to think like this ; and of that same gospel this age of ours, dwelling heavy-hearted amid its triumphs and splendors, has infinite need. The stage upon which the drama of our life is being enacted has come to be greatly more wonderful to us than in the sight of any that have gone before. If, then, we may still think and feel that it is above all else the stage whereon God's children play their part, our new knowledge will increase the sense of the value of that life for which such preparation has been made. Otherwise,

our personal existence sinks in the scale of comparison, and we are depressed by a sense of its little worth.

Another thing which the gospel of Christ did for men was to lift them out of that prison within which their own system-making understanding always tends to shut them up. One way or another, this understanding, in defiance of the testimony of consciousness, is forever busy constructing the picture of some great mechanism of things whose working it can comprehend, and by which, with all the rest, the action of mankind is governed. Our moral sense tells us without ceasing that we are free. "Not so," says the understanding. "You may seem to be free; but, like all else, you do what the great system compels you to undertake and perform." So arrogant has the intellect become in these later days that it often assumes as a proven fact that mechanical universe which is no more than its own pure assumption. And so boldly is the assertion made that other men, thinking they must accept it, have tried to adjust religion to that basis. To "infinite law and order" they therefore sing their hymns and address their prayers. And they appear to think that, in ridding themselves of belief in miracle, in doing away with the free King of heaven, to fill his place with what may be called an apotheosis of system and red tape, they have accomplished for themselves and for mankind the great deliverance. Now belief in miracle is of no considerable consequence to anybody, otherwise than as that has been the form which belief in personal government of the world has hitherto taken. Being so considered, however, it is plain enough that modern thought will not be able to demolish belief in miracle with any weapon it has yet constructed, so long as it leaves the

world without a personal Governor and King. The mind of our race is bound to hold to the supremacy of personality and of personal force. It has an instinct deeper than reason which forever teaches it to cling fast to that insight; for the world, as nothing but a machine, becomes at last an intolerable prison to the human spirit, no matter how perfect its contrivances may be. Tell me that endless progress is before me, that my spirit grows as grows the tree, that step by step I am to be carried upward and onward forever, but tell me no more than this, and presently I find that, however beautiful the system may be, I am Ariel, shut up in the cleft of riven pine; and I long for some Prospero to come and set me free.

The very essence of our earthly manhood is civil and religious liberty. And he who robs me of the freedom of my spirit takes from me the whole substance and foundation of my personal existence. I am a free being, free even as respects the great God himself, so that I can rebel against him and thwart his purpose so far as my own life is concerned. This I am, or I remain no more than a slave; and a slave even of the most benevolent despotism, though it were the perfect rule of the Almighty, knows himself to be defrauded of the greatest gift his Creator has designed for him. The speculations of the intellect may do their utmost to bribe or overawe me, as the champions of Cæsarism in society are always promising better food and raiment if men will give up struggling to be free. But, while conscience speaks to me its rebuke and its praise for what I have done, I will believe that I am truly the author of my own deeds, though I satisfy myself of no other certainty. It can avail me nothing to make all gains besides, if I must thereby

lose my soul. And, in effect, I have lost my soul when I have come to think of myself no longer as a free personality, but as a mere predetermined succession of differing states of consciousness.

To what extent mechanical interpretations of life have displaced the old thought of a personal universe, and just what difference this makes in the mood and behavior of the common mind, it may be difficult to say. One suspects, however, that the change has gone very far. And though in the end it must prove impossible to drive the reason of mankind from that moral basis to which it is firmly anchored, yet opposing beliefs may be responsible for the difference frequently to be observed between a meagre and an abounding tide of moral and religious life. In all outward affairs the emphasis seems to lie at present upon the effort to furnish the man with a more perfect machine, rather than on the attempt to find for the machine a man sufficiently wise and good to use it for the highest purposes. Does not this indicate one conspicuous weakness of modern life which remains to be corrected before we can reap the full advantage of our great increase in knowledge?

Our age has partially forgotten that personality remains always the predominant fact of existence. It cherishes too much the foolish belief in a system of divine government so perfect that it needs no Deity to manage and control it. The effect of that belief is to inspire doubts of the reality of the moral strife to which we here seem to be committed. For of what avail is our endeavor if the interlocked wheels of fate are already set and preordained to deliver a certain product at the end of days? And if God is to do everything, what is there left for us to attempt?

Because people have come to entertain this theory of the sufficiency of a mere mechanical universe, they shut away from their sight the great tragedy of human existence. Of course, nobody can be lost, and probably the suffering of the world is not so very bad, if we are to think of existence merely as a kind of divine contrivance for getting all souls to heaven at last. This whole mechanical tendency has at last reached its logical culmination in an absurd philosophy, which openly denies the real existence of evil ; and now it is to be hoped that, seeing the end of that pathway, the world will turn back to the higher witness of its better self. For conscience tells me, not alone that God is creating me in his likeness, but that he is helping me to create myself after the pattern which he has shown me. The liberty and the obligation to do this distinguish me forever, as a person, from things which cannot be self-made. If I succeed in what God asks of me as his child, then have I won a glorious triumph, and deserved a great reward ; and if through cowardice and selfishness I altogether fail, then must I taste a bitterness that is worse than death. So does Christianity bid men understand that life is real and earnest, that its risks are no mere painted show of dangers, just sufficient to frighten the foolish and unwary, but are grim and terrible realities, because it is only through such wrestlings and encounters that the sons of God can prove their birthright and their fealty.

Three sublime ideas the Christian faith has set in the forefront of man's consciousness, wherever its sway extends : the idea of God as the Father of souls ; the idea of the spiritual man as a child of the Infinite and Almighty ; the idea of an immanent, all-pervading Holy Spirit, which brings these two into closest inti-

macy and communion. And these three ideas Christianity has filled and saturated with the thought of personality. Its method of doing this may have been imperfect. The dogmas it has taught may be open to criticism. Nevertheless, the heart of its purpose was true and sound. For these great ideas contain the spirit and the genius of the teaching of Christ, and they are far more important to mankind than all other knowledge it possesses.

To preach this gospel, even to an unbelieving age, is a sublime vocation. Though the world may not give much heed, he who has heard and understood the message knows it to be the real foundation and beginning of man's higher life. The unconscious heart will often respond to it, while the conscious mind is busy with quite other thoughts ; and though they be few, out of many millions, who speak the good news of God, yet must the tidings spread till knowledge of these divine truths shall cover the earth, as waters cover the sea.

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Size, 5 1-2 x 8 inches; pages, 396; price, \$1.50 *net*; postage, 13 cents.

THE purpose and scope of this volume cannot be better shown than by giving the subjects and authors of the thirteen chapters which make up its contents. These are: I. "William Brewster and the Independents," by Edwin D. Mead; II. "Roger Williams and the Doctrine of Soul Liberty," by W. H. P. Faunce; III. "Thomas Hooker and the Principle of Congregational Independency," by Williston Walker, IV. "William Penn and the Gospel of the Inner Light," by Benjamin B. Trueblood; V. "Thomas Jefferson and the Influence of Democracy on Religion," by Thomas R. Slicer; VI. "William Ellery Channing and the Growth of Spiritual Christianity," by William W. Fenn; VII. "Horace Bushnell and Progressive Orthodoxy," by Washington Gladden; VIII. "Hosea Ballou and the Larger Hope," by John Coleman Adams; IX. "Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Teaching of the Divine Immanence," by Francis G. Peabody; X. "Theodore Parker and the Naturalization of Religion," by James Eells; XI. "Phillips Brooks and the Unity of the Spirit," by Samuel A. Eliot.

The chapters making up this book were delivered as lectures in Boston in the spring of 1903, and attracted much attention. The purpose of the lectures and of the book is to set forth some of the great principles through which religious freedom in this country was achieved, and the connection with these principles of the great men who advocated them and gave them their power and enduring vitality. These thirteen champions of religious freedom were truly pioneers in the work in which they became so conspicuous, and no one can so fully realize the significance of our present freedom of thought in religious matters as by reading these accounts of the inception and growth of the religious principles which constitute so valued a part of our religious inheritance.

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25 Beacon Street, Boston

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American Unitarian Association
25 BEACON STREET BOSTON, MASS.

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JESUS AS HUMANITY'S IDEAL.

BY

REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND.

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

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WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

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JESUS AS HUMANITY'S IDEAL.

"Looking unto Jesus."—*Epistle to the Hebrews*.

"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."—*Jesus*.

"Was Christ a man like us? Ah! let us try

If we too, then, can be such men as he!"—*Matthew Arnold*.

It is hardly possible to estimate the power of ideals in human life. I am disposed to think there is no one who does not *have* his ideals, conscious or unconscious. Some there may be who are not clearly *aware* that they possess them, just as we all breathe and do many other things which we are not conscious of. But I am disposed to think that absolutely every human being really does have, hung on the walls of that room of his mind where dwells the wonderful faculty which we call the imagination, pictures, dim or clear, of what seems to him the most desirable kind of life—pictures of persons, whom perhaps he knows, or may be has known in some past time, or if not that then persons dreamed of, who represent to his thought the kind of life he would like to be able to live.

It is these pictures that largely shape men's conduct, just as the painter's mental conception of what he wishes to embody guides his brush, and makes the picture he paints turn out this or that. As the courses of ships over the sea are determined by the ports they seek, so are men's careers and characters determined by their ideals.

We have all read tales of persons led on, perhaps to some great good, or perhaps to their destruction, by a vision of some beautiful, may be some seemingly angelic form, appearing to them and beckoning them to follow its lead. These legends are really pictures of our own histories. We are all following visions—we go through the world following visions, angelic or devilish, that lead us up or down—to

salvation or ruin. These visions are nothing less nor more than our ideals.

Fortunate the persons who early in life form noble ideals! Fortunate those boys and girls who are blessed with *parents* so wise and true as to become ideals to go before them, as the star before the wise men from the East, and not by commanding but by gracious shining guide the young feet in wisdom's ways. Happy the young who find *teachers* so noble and inspiring as to become to them ideals!

He who reads the history of Rugby school when Arnold was its Head Master and thinks what a place that fine and chivalric spirit made for himself in the hearts and lives of the hundreds of young men who came under his influence, will know what I mean when I speak of a teacher wise and noble enough to become an ideal to the young.

Happy are they who find worthy ideals in books! But woe to young men or women who read books that give them ideals that are false and morally unworthy!

The great patriots, heroes and benefactors of the world perhaps do their greatest good to mankind, not while they live, by their actual deeds, but after they are dead, by becoming the ideals and inspirers of those who come after them.

In the same way, conspicuous and brilliant bad men and women are likely to harm the world most by vitiating its ideals.

Undoubtedly the world's greatest creator of lofty and inspiring ideals is religion.

The galaxy of noble characters that religion has lifted up before men for their emulation is large and rich. And even in cases where those lifted up had in their actual lives many imperfections, religion in lifting them up usually idealizes them, so that what she points men to for their emulation is likely to be high and pure.

There are few to dispute the claim that the very loftiest ideal of life and character that religion has ever given the world is that which we have in Jesus of Nazareth.

In saying this I do not mean to disparage other biblical characters, as Moses and Isaiah and Paul. Certainly these were great and noble persons; and the reverence that men have paid them has been not only deserved, but it has been elevating and ennobling to those who have paid it. Yet few certainly would think of claiming either of these men as the equal of Jesus.

Neither would I wish for a moment to drop out of sight or disparage such great and honored religious teachers outside of Jewish and Christian history, as Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, Zoroaster, Confucius, Buddha, and even Mahomet. Marcus Aurelius is certainly one of the finest religious spirits of the world. So, in many respects, is Socrates. Mahomet is a strong character, with some fine traits, and it is not difficult to see how he obtained a personal following, and became an ideal to millions; though when we to-day place him beside the other religious teachers whom I have named, it is easy to see that he is morally and spiritually, if not intellectually, their inferior. Zoroaster is veiled in much historic obscurity: yet there seems to be ground for believing that he was a pure and lofty soul that taught one of the purest and loftiest forms of religion that the world has ever known. Confucius was an exalted character, worthy of admiration not only from the Chinese but from all men. And if his teaching was hardly more than *morality*, lacking certain essential elements of *religion*, at least we must confess that as morality it is high and worthy. Buddha was a character exceedingly winning. True, the outcome of his religious thought is dismal, but as a man he undoubtedly stood on a very lofty height. His unselfishness seems perfect; his sympathy with humanity has perhaps never been surpassed. I do not wonder that he became an object of enthusiastic admiration and finally of worship to a large section of mankind.

But, by the side of all these noble characters, we need not fear to place the great Galilean. It used to be feared by some that a study of the other great religions of the world and their prophets and teachers might dim the lustre

of our own. But the fear has proved groundless; at least it has proved groundless so far as the character and teachings of Jesus are concerned. Wherever knowledge of him has gone he has won the homage of mankind. To see him has been to confess the beauty and greatness of his life. Men do not need to prove to others that the sun gives light, or that it is superior in brilliancy to the moon, or stars, or a camp fire. Let each shine; that settles it all. So it has been with Jesus among the world's great religious teachers.

And now, does any one fail to see the moral value there is to mankind in having such men as all these that I have named, lifted up into the positions of examples and moral ideals to their fellows? We may object to their being accounted gods, and worshiped, as has been the case with Buddha and Jesus; for thus religion becomes degraded into superstition. But all that can be done to lift up pure and noble *human ideals*, and to lift them up in connection with religion, as object lessons and shining examples for men in their upward striving, is surely good. Better could the world afford to have its stars of first magnitude stripped from its physical firmament than its great moral and spiritual saints and prophets from the sky of its ideal life.

Let us ask the question with some definiteness, just how it is that Jesus has benefitted the world.

The benefit which Jesus has conferred, and is conferring, upon mankind, I believe to be primarily two-fold: first, that of a teacher; second, and even more important, that of inspirer.

As a teacher of truth he certainly occupies a very lofty place in the world—a place probably second to none. The truths about which he concerned himself were of the very first order: they were the truths of the soul, those truths which pertain to the strengthening, the enlarging, the ennobling of man's nature. Such truths must always be ranked as of the highest importance.

True, much that he taught had been set forth more or less clearly by Jewish prophets and seers before him, and even by great teachers of other nations; for no age or race

has a monopoly of light or knowledge; and, as Paul says, God hath not left himself without witness in any land. Truth is a plant: its seed is dropped often from an unknown source; the winds and rains born of many climes water it; the sun over all gives it warmth. So it grows, and by and by blossoms, and at last bears fruit. Thus the truth that rose to finest blossoming and most perfect fruitage in Jesus was from seed sown, God only knows how far back in the world's spiritual history, and nourished by influences, God only knows from how many ages and lands. All we can say is that the vision, which others before him had seen in part, it was given him to see more perfectly; the words which they had spoken stammeringly it was given him to speak with such clearness and grace and power that they thrilled all who heard, and took their place at once as a part of the richest treasure of the world's moral and spiritual wisdom.

And yet, important and even revolutionary as were his teachings, especially his teaching of God's Fatherhood and men's brotherhood, I think his life—his life culminating as it did in his heroic martyr death—was more important and powerful still, both in its influence upon those who knew him and those who came after him. His utterances alone—at least as they are reported to us—can by no means account for the profound impression he made upon his time and the powerful religious movement he was able to set in operation in the world. It is plain, judging from the biographies we have of him and from the effects that have flowed from his life, that he must have been a singularly strong, unselfish, loving and heroic soul,—possessed of a character both winning and commanding in the very highest degree.

This would seem to be the rational explanation of what certainly happened. For no sooner was he dead and gone out of their sight than he became to his disciples and followers their ideal. They did not worship him; on the contrary they spoke of him steadily as a man; but their enthusiasm for him and their sense of his nobleness and worth

seemed to overtop every other feeling, and their loyalty rose to such a pitch of enthusiasm,—steady, unflagging enthusiasm,—that they would willingly die for the things he taught, and for the honor of his name.

Nor did this personal loyalty and devotion stop with his immediate followers, but it communicated itself to those who came after them. The ideal which had risen with such splendor before their eyes, and with such power over their lives, they were able to bequeath to their children and the generations following; indeed it has never faded or lost its charm and power; rather, has it extended its influence; from being the ideal of simply a handful of personal followers, becoming the ideal of thousands, of millions, of nations, of races, until unquestionably, to-day it, more than any other, is the ideal of the civilized world.

Here, then, I think it is, that we find the way in which Jesus has most benefitted the world. He not only taught truth—truth the loftiest and most important that the mind can conceive—but, what was vastly more important, he lived it, and thus became its incarnation among men. Truth merely spoken is ever comparatively cold and dead. Live it, and you increase its generating power a hundred fold. Character impresses as no words ever can. He who speaks truth is a voice—nothing more. He who lives truth becomes an example, an ideal; and it is ideals that move men with a power greater than any other known in the moral world, lifting them upward and ever more upward if the ideals are noble, but dragging them downward and ever more downward if the ideals are base.

Notice some of the lower ideals which compete with the Christ ideal in the world—ideals which degrade and injure men, but which the ideal which we have in Jesus tends ever to correct.

One of these lower ideals is the *military*. How many ages have been dominated by the thought of military glory! The man before whom all bowed was the great captain. The career to which the young man looked as the most attractive and glorious that his imagination could paint was

that of the hero in battle or the commander of armies.

Even in Christian ages and lands this military ideal has been a widely prevailing one. And yet ever, even when the war spirit has run highest, another ideal has lifted itself up silently, by the side of that of conquest and blood and glory. It has been the ideal of the gentle Christ, who said, "put up thy sword";—the Christ whose whole life was love; at whose birth-hour the legend says angels sung, "peace on earth, good will to men." Cruel enough has been the havoc of war since Jesus lived and died. But who can tell how much worse it would have been, had not the ideal of the Prince of Peace, of him who loved even his enemies, and who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, hung as a sacred image in the thought and heart of thousands, to restrain their cruelty, and to woo them to mercy and peace! It is sad to think how much of war there is yet, even in Christendom, and how many professedly Christian nations are armed camps. And yet to-day it is plain that the military hero nowhere stands in so high honor as once he did. Just in the degree in which the Christ ideal rises in its beauty, the military ideal shrinks away out of sight, as an ugly, horrible thing of the darkness.

The military ideal has had in this century an unfortunate revival, mainly as the result of the career of one man. Near the beginning of the century there arose in Europe an extraordinary military genius. From the humblest position he quickly leaped to the head of the armies of a great nation. Then the ambition fired him to become the conqueror of Europe and the world. He led his armies in all directions. Nothing could stand against him. Thrones tottered and fell. Nations threw themselves at his feet. At last, however, his conquests came to an end, but not until death had reaped its harvest of millions of the best lives of the civilized world.

This extraordinary career of Napoleon raised high once more in Europe the waning military ideal of life. To-day all Europe is an armed camp. France now has an army larger than ever Napoleon led. Germany compels every able.

bodied man within the limits of the empire to give some of the best years of his life to the army. Nearly every other nation of Christendom follows in the wake of these. So that everywhere in Europe taxation and militarism have become a burden almost too great to be borne.

In all this we see the terrible effect of a false ideal of life, set up by a brilliant and bad man. This military ideal which Napoleon bequeathed to France and Europe cannot always last; but it is terrible while it does last, and no one can tell the suffering that is likely to come before Europe recovers from this set-back, this reversion for the time being to a lower type of political and social life. But the Christ ideal—though hidden out of sight for a time by forts and cannon and the paraphernalia of war, is not dead; nor can it die. It is God's ideal; it is humanity's true, eternally true, ideal; therefore men cannot permanently rest in anything lower or poorer.

Another low ideal of life, which is even more wide-spread than the military, and which, equally with it, wars with that which we see in Christ, is that of *wealth-getting*,—I mean wealth-getting for mere wealth's sake, or for ends of selfishness.

The wealth-ideal is a very fascinating one to-day, particularly in this country. Young men around us look up to the millionaire with something of the same envy that the youth of three or four hundred years ago looked up to the knight, or the baron, or the great captain. Perhaps the temptation to sell one's soul for wealth, that is, to let character and manhood go for the sake of getting wealth, was never greater than now. But it must be resisted.

Not that wealth is necessarily an evil. If honestly obtained, held as subordinate to things that are higher, and used for worthy ends, it is a good. But he who has come to think of the getting of it as the supreme object of life, is far on the way toward perdition, if he has not already crossed its threshold.

The gospels give us a legend of certain temptations that were said to have come upon Jesus, from the devil. One

part of the legend runs: "The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them: and he saith unto him: All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." A very small price to pay, surely, for such boundless possessions! Did Jesus yield? Sternly he replied, "Get thee hence, Satan." Here is a lesson for millions to-day. The true man must say, "Get thee hence, Satan," to many an offer of wealth, and honor, and preferment, and worldly good that involves dishonor. In the stillness of the night the Christ-ideal speaks to you and me and all men saying: "He that seeketh to save his life (that is, liveth for self) shall lose it; but he that loseth his life for truth and right and duty, shall save it."

Another ideal of life, closely related to wealth-getting, is that of *pleasure seeking*. But a greater delusion never fell upon men than that of thinking pleasure a worthy, or in any sense whatever a satisfying object to live for. To live for pleasure is to chase a mirage, and die famished in a desert. But he who lives the life of the Christ-ideal will, with this ideal, find the noblest and most enduring pleasures that this world has to give. He will not find them, however, because he selfishly seeks for them, but because, forgetting self, he lives for love and duty and God.

One great value of the Christ-ideal is that it forms a standard whereby to test all the false and the doubtful ideals of the world. If I set my clock by my neighbor's it will not be at all certain to be right. But if we both set our clocks by the sun, neither will be likely to be far wrong.

The great tendency among men everywhere is to follow the standards and ideals that are dominant in the particular society in which they happen to move. It is a great thing to have a standard that overtops my little circle and yours, that can be seen from community to community, from nation to nation, from age to age. Such a standard has the Christ-life come to be. Not because anybody has decreed that it should be so, but because that life is in itself so intrinsically beautiful that when men have seen it

they have felt its beauty, and enshrined it in their hearts.

It has been urged that the final standard in all judgments is the "consensus of the competent." Very well, in Jesus we have the consensus of the competent objectivized in matters religious, just as in Shakespeare, Beethoven and Angelo we have the consensus of the competent objectivized in matters poetical, musical, and artistic. The world seeks for its best. When the men and women whose judgments are of most value, everywhere, with almost perfect unanimity point to Angelo in art, and say, "He is best," and to Beethoven in music and Shakespeare in poetry and say, "They are best," we gladly accept the verdict, lift them up into places of honor, become learners of them, make what they have done a standard, whereby to test and measure and correct our poorer work. So it is in morals and religion. Here too we ask, "Who is best?" that here also as in art and poetry and music we may have our ideals and standards and masters to teach us. With a unanimity quite as great as in the cases already referred to, the word comes back, "Jesus is best." And so we take his life and lift it up on high, and say, "It shall be a standard by which we will correct the lower and poorer standards which we have set up for ourselves; it shall be an ideal to inspire us to better things than we have yet reached; it shall be a luminary in our sky in the light of which we will walk."

"As when the valleys all in shadow lie,
And shadowy shapes of fear still haunt the night,
Some mountain peak reflects the coming light,
And waiting lips break forth with joyful cry
For gladness that at last the day is nigh,—
So when some soul, that towers afar, is bright,
The souls that sit in shadow, at the sight
Grow sudden glad to know *'tis light on high!*

"And when these mountain-towering men can say,
'*They see, though it be hidden from our eyes,*
We can believe in better things to be!
So, though the shadows still obscure our way,
We see the light, reflecting from the skies,
That crowns thy brows, O Man of Galilee!"

Thus it is that in his light we see light. Thus it is that in his light the ages have been walking, and shall walk, finding safety, and wisdom and great hope.

Quite the saddest and darkest side of Christian history is that which records the wanderings of the church away from the simple Christ ideal. For centuries the church called by Christ's name, strayed away into deserts and wildernesses of forms, ceremonies, theological speculations and dogmas utterly foreign to the teachings and the life of him from whom Christianity came. Nor are those wanderings over yet.

Hence the continued barrenness of the Church as regards practical fruit. Hence too its pitiful divisions into warring sects and factions, where should be one great brotherhood of good works and peace.

To-day there is nothing in Christendom more hopeful than the signs appearing in a few quarters at least, of a desire to return from these disastrous wanderings to the simple and beautiful Christ-ideal again.

No unimportant part of the mission of the Church that calls us together for worship here this morning, and of the whole Unitarian fellowship which it represents, is to do what they can to help bring about such a return. This has been a distinct and constant aim of the Unitarian movement from the beginning. And this aim it can never relinquish until it is attained, until Christianity, freed from its long slavery to creeds and ecclesiastical systems that Jesus did not teach, becomes once more the simple religion of love and duty, which its great founder taught and lived, and which in him so charmed the world.

Oh, for a new revelation of the Christ-life to men! It would transform the church. It would win mankind. Who could resist it? Who would desire to resist it, any more than to resist the beauty of flowers, or the light of day?

For the theological Christ the world has no need. Too long has that abstraction, that spectre, created by the minds of priests and dogmatists, darkened and cursed religion.

But for the real human Christ who lived and taught in

Galilee; the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount, and the Golden Rule, and the incomparable Parables; the Christ who loved his fellow men so tenderly, alike the rich and the poor, the good and the bad, and spent his life going about doing good; the Christ who was faithful in all duty—faithful even unto death; the Christ who had such matchless power to impress himself upon others, communicating to them his spirit, and making them to feel the beauty of holiness, the nearness of God, and the devineness of humanity; the Christ who has been the inspiration of so much of the world's best beneficence, bravest deeds, and loftiest consecration, in all the ages since he trod the earth; the Christ whose life among his fellows was so transcendently pure and noble that those who saw it lifted it up on high as an ideal for themselves and for all men—for that Christ, the world, the Christian Church, and all of us as individuals, have a need greater than any language of mine can tell.

I took as my text the words, "Looking unto Jesus." It is not speaking extravagance, but only what the experience of eighteen centuries confirms as the simplest truth, when I say, that the world has never found any other human source of inspiration and strength to which it can look with so much profit.

And his help is for all. It is for rich and poor; it is for the strongest and the weakest. It is for you and me. Let us avail ourselves of it. In our temptations, our discouragements, our perplexities, our fears, our sorrows, we may look to him and find in his example new courage and hope; we may touch him and draw from him new moral life and power.

No, friends, it has not been an accident or a mistake that has caused so large a part of the world to choose as its ideal of life, and its leader in the things of the spirit, the prophet of Nazareth, the martyr of Jerusalem. May we all be wise enough to shape our lives in the light of his.

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25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

A list of free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional and practical works, will be sent to all who apply.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals.

There are two forms of membership in this Association provided for those who desire to cooperate in the spread of liberal religious thought and influence:

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R E L I G I O N

BY

CHARLES W. ELIOT, LL.D.

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APR 1 9 1917

RELIGION.*

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,—Religion, in our view, is not a matter of interest chiefly for the serious moments of life: it is not to be reserved, in the main, for such grave occasions as marriage or the birth of children, or for great disasters or sorrows, or for the approach of death. It is the whole atmosphere of life: it is the foundation of character. It is not a gush of feeling or a sudden outburst of enthusiasm. It should be a still, steady glow. Is there any subject of thought in the whole world concerning which there is greater need of clearness and candor? I cannot imagine any topic of human inquiry in which there is such an intense need of perfect freedom from self-deceit and from confusion of mind. This is the topic to which I would invite your attention for a few moments.

Some one will at once object that religion is a sentiment, and that sentiments are unreasoning things. It is true that religion is a sentiment. That means that religion is one of the prime motives of conduct and one of the great moving powers of the world. The great powers of the world are all sentiments. You

*This address was given before the Young People's Religious Union in their meeting of Anniversary Week, 1902.

may read in Professor James's last book — "The Varieties of Religious Experience" — that the two realest things in the world are personality and the sentiments entertained by personalities. These sentiments are things more truly real than mountain or ocean or forest or town. My son, who is now president of the American Unitarian Association, exhibited in early manhood some business capacity; and an old friend of mine, who thought he had best go into railroad work, offered him a position on the railroad of which he was president. After reflection my son declined the offer, saying that he meant to study for the ministry. Whereupon my good friend said to him: "You don't mean to say that you are going to be a minister? I thought you were going in for something real." My son did go in for something real, the realest thing in the world,—influence over ruling sentiments.

That religion is a sentiment, therefore, is no reason why it should not be the subject of the clearest thought. How a few sentiments control our individual lives,—sentiments that have controlled the whole development of the human race,—the love between man and woman, the love of children, the love of parents, clan, home, and country! These are the moving sentiments which history shows to govern all peoples. Shall we dispense with clear thinking about these sentiments? Shall we not endeavor to think clearly about the love of children, for example, that we may learn to discriminate between the wise and the foolish love, that we may learn how to make that exquisite affection tenderer, purer, and more effectual? Never permit any one to convince you that it is an excuse for obscurity of thought concerning religion that religion is a sentiment.

Another objection often raised to clear thought in religion is that religion is a mystery. This objection is urged, first, by persons who wish to swallow religious mysteries whole, and, secondly, by persons who object to all religion because it is mysterious. Now religion is a mystery,—a real mystery. But that is no reason that we should not think about it with a perfect candor and clearness. Indeed, the things that are most worth inquiring into in this world are all uncertainties, problems, and mysteries. A thing that is already certain is not worth long thinking about. It is the doubtful things that you need to probe and reflect on. When you have once learned that the sum of the angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles, you do not need to think any more about that dull but useful truth ; but, if you have on your hands, as our country now has, a formidable moral problem,—our duty to millions of semi-civilized and savage people in the Philippines, for example,—you have every possible reason for thinking about it, for studying it, for bringing to its solution every power of clear thought you have. I think we shall all admit on reflection that there is little worth thinking long about except the uncertain, the doubtful, the problematical, the mysterious. Moreover, is there any difficulty in thinking clearly round about the mysterious ? If there is any insuperable difficulty, we simply cannot get on in this world ; because we are absolutely immersed in mystery, and the things we call practical or real in the plainest sense of those words are almost all mysteries. Take, for instance, the power that lights us in this meeting-house at this moment. Not a man ever breathed who had the faintest idea of the nature of electricity. It is an absolute mystery, root and

branch, from beginning to end. Never has any mortal man had a clear idea of the nature of electricity. It is called by a multitude of names ; but the name that the Cambridge motorman gave to it when he first turned his crank is just as good as any scientific name given it. He called it the "juice." We have actually applied it to our service in innumerable ways, but its essential nature remains as perfect a mystery as ever. We have not the least conception of how a single blade of wheat springs from the ground, elaborates its essential parts, and grows ; and in all probability we never shall have. We have not the least idea how the colors on the robin's breast have been transmitted from generation to generation for thousands of years without any perceptible change in the colors, the tints of every feather perpetuated through the formless, colorless, microscopic atom by which one robin transmits to another generation of robins, year after year, generation after generation, century after century, and epoch after epoch, the marks and qualities of the species. Forever are the colors on the breast of the bird perpetuated ; and we cannot conceive how it is done. I say we are absolutely immersed in mystery in our daily lives, amid all our most practical affairs, amid all the things we call real. Yet we utilize these mysteries by clear, bold thinking. Therefore let us not excuse ourselves for lack of clear thought about religion on the ground that it is mysterious.

But, again, let us be careful never to pretend to believe a mystery. That is not the right attitude of the mind toward the unknown. How do we treat the more familiar mysteries,—electricity, for example ? We apply to actual uses, and to the discovery of new applications, every particle of knowledge we have

concerning that essentially unknown force ; and we seek every day to acquire an atom more of applicable knowledge. The scientific man never pretends that he understands the fundamental nature of the mystery he studies, never believes he knows not what ; yet he thinks clearly about it. That scientific frame of mind accounts for the extraordinary progress of mankind during the last hundred years in the daily use of powers mysterious. And that is precisely the way we should approach and deal with the religious mystery.

Then let us always be careful to observe the distinction between a mystery—a genuine mystery—and a mystification. That is a very important distinction. God has surrounded us with mysteries ; but it is man that has made mystifications. There are real mysteries in the conduct of the universe at which we must look bravely and resignedly, with humble minds. Such are useless pain, the sufferings of the innocent, the shortness of human life, the broken career, and premature death. These are real mysteries in the presence of which we must often be dumb. But there are many things in this world that are called mysteries which, in fact, are only human mystifications ; and among them are the chief theological doctrines built up by men round about the teachings of Jesus. I refer of course to such purely human inventions as the doctrines of transubstantiation, justification by faith, the Trinity, and the numerous other theological devices of human logic applied to premises altogether of human selection. Give a very fallible but opinionated creature the power to select his premises, and then to apply to them his own logic, and we must not be surprised if he often arrives at a mystification or a paradox which

he erects into a dogma. Therefore let us keep clearly in our own minds the distinction between a genuine mystery and a mystification.

Again, it is important for us, I think, to bear in mind that religion is after all the result of human experience and observation. That is to say, what is held to be true in religion at any stage in the world's progress is the result of the observation and experience of the human race up to that epoch. The different races of the world have had different opportunities of observation and different experiences. So we find different religious systems as the results of these different opportunities of observation and experience. The best religions are the results of the best observations and experiences; and the worst, the lowest, are the results of only savage or barbaric observations and experiences. In each individual man his religion is a reflection of his own experience and observation, and of himself. You remember what it says in our Sacred Book: "With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright; with the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward." Thus does the human soul reflect its own presentment of God. Thus are God's mien and behavior toward a man inevitably affected by the man's demeanor toward God.

Through all its history our race has been gradually developing the religious conceptions which are current to-day. How many forms of Deity the race has worshipped! The patriarch was a type of God; so were the ruler, the king, the fighter, the lord of hosts, the shepherd, and the judge implacable. Man's conception of God has mounted century after century,

has become exalted, purified, and ennobled. In a very true sense, "Each age must worship its own thought of God," as Lowell said. In a very true sense each human being imagines his own God. This gradual purification and exaltation is the legitimate result of clearer and clearer thinking. And that clearer, juster thinking is what our own generation greatly needs. That is what our generation must have, in order to free itself from the curse of materialism. That is what will fill again the empty churches, — clearness of view on the sacred things of life, clearness of view concerning heaven and hell in this present, actual world.

Then we all need a perfectly clear conception of what a religious man is. Earlier generations have entertained strange conceptions of what it is to be religious. A ceremony, an observance, worship of a sacred book, a beloved ritual, or a sacrament, or all these things together, will never make any person truly religious. These may be aids to the maintenance of institutions of religion. They are not religion, and never can be. And, indeed, when we come to the bottom of the matter, there is only one decisive test of the religious state of a human being. We declared just now in our responsive reading that we meant to work together, believing that religion is love to God and love to man. Now the true test of the religious quality of a human being is really this, — does he love man? If he loves man truly, he cannot help loving God; and there is no way of telling whether he loves God, except by seeing whether or not he loves man. Let us remember this in our own daily lives, and in our judgments of our fellows.

Abou Ben Adhem put this matter just right, when

the angel told him that his name was not written in the book of those who loved the Lord.

“Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still, and said, ‘I pray thee, then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow-men.’
The angel wrote, and vanished; the next night
He came again, with a great awakening light,
And showed their names whom love of God had blest.
And, lo! Ben Adhem’s name led all the rest.”

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FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE THE CHILDREN OF SORROW

BY

REV. CHARLES A. ALLEN.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
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THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS
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APR 12 1917

FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE, THE CHILDREN OF SORROW.

Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? — LUKE xxiv. 26.

And now abideth faith, hope, and love, only these three; and the greatest of these is love. — 1 COR. xiii. 13.

The disciples had come up to Jerusalem, expecting that their Master would soon be proclaimed as the king of a new kingdom. But, instead of this, a sudden arrest and a hurried trial were followed by his ignominious death. It was a crushing blow, shattering all their eager hopes and making them even waver in their loyalty to him. For, when he was lifted on the cross, how hard for them to believe that he was really the Chosen of God!

Thus they came under the shadow of the mysterious problem of suffering,—a problem that still troubles many Christian hearts; for they asked then, as many ask to-day: "Why should good men who deserve happiness be called to suffer? Why should even the Christ be called to suffer?"

Perplexing and distressing have these questions often seemed; but Christian faith has always taught that in suffering and sorrow there are blessed purposes, that these experiences which at first seem full of wrath and terror are really angels in disguise.

"Sorrow and suffering, poverty and death,
One after other lift their frowning masks,
And we behold the seraph's face beneath,
All radiant with the glory and the calm
Of having looked upon the front of God."

And then these angels, when we recognize them as such, bring us privileges and blessings, which are among the highest joys of human life,— which we should entirely miss if it were not for our experiences of suffering and sorrow. Let us consider three of these, which in their highest meaning are distinctively Christian privileges.

FAITH.

I. In the first place, there is the privilege of religious faith, the belief of the heart in an unseen, everywhere present Power who cares for us with fatherly love. Rarely do we gain any degree of true faith in God while life is full of sunshine, and we live for the happiness of the passing day. As Martineau says, “Whatever is *higher* than happiness is revealed to us only in the *loss* of happiness,”— as the stars are seen above us only when the daylight fades around us, — “and that which is highest of all, the life of religion, the sense of sanctity, the allegiance to God, find no place within us till we are cast down in deep affliction.” For the great convictions of faith become clear to us, not by the arguments of reason or the influences of nature, neither of which suggest any faith in God’s personal love, and therefore no true faith in God (since only they who “dwell” in the divinest love really “know God” and truly believe in Him), but by the moral experiences of the heart in times of suffering and sorrow, or in times of guilt and penitence, when, in the loss of happiness and peace, we keenly feel our dependence on God and gladly listen to words of help and mercy. Suffering, then, is “a divinely ordained means for calling out the higher energies of the soul,” the energies of faith, which, even against discouraging appearances, can still trust in the Unseen Love and the Everlasting Life. For this reason no deep religiousness can be looked for in a child.

“ Heaven is not mounted to on wings of dreams ;
Nor doth the unthankful happiness of youth
Aim thitherward, but floats from flower to flower,
With earth’s warm patch of sunshine well content.”

For this reason also certain periods of history have been singularly godless. “It is the great danger of an age of wide-spread wealth and luxury,” says Principal Ottley of Oxford, “that it loses the sight of spiritual realities.” And such an age, then, needs the discipline of suffering, which has often brought about a great revival of faith.

But these experiences of suffering and sorrow need *a wise interpreter* to make their deepest meaning understood. Such an interpreter is Christianity with its message of a love which is compassionate to the sinner as well as to the saint, and is aiming at a final good in even the bitterest pains. Compare it with Buddhism and Judaism. The former has no faith in God at all, and therefore recognizes no wise purpose anywhere : in suffering and sorrow it sees only evil. The Hebrew faith, on the other hand, believed more intensely in God than any other pre-Christian religion, but limited His fatherly pity to “them that fear,” that is, obey, “Him.” It was sure that suffering is always a retribution for sin, and that “the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly” will always prosper,—a faith which the first psalm teaches ; and it failed to see the truth which Jesus taught by his reverent love for the publicans and sinners, and his heroic trust in those tragic last hours. Christianity alone, in the great message for which the Cross stands, helps us to find by life’s sufferings and sorrows a true faith in God, assuring us that we are the children of an All-embracing Love and the heirs of an Immortal World, so that thus we enter into the true glory of this present life.

HOPE.

II. Then, again, there is the privilege of religious hope, that is, of an unselfish longing to be perfect. For the hope that is in any manner selfish — such as the hope to be rich or distinguished, the hope to excel in some mental power or artistic skill which the world will praise, or the hope of salvation in the sense of being admitted to a heaven that is far aloof from the world of sinners — is not Christian. But we find a suggestion of the true meaning in the words of Dr. Edwin Abbott of London, “When you have put away each selfish expectation, you may be sure that your every hope will be crowned with fulfilment; nothing will seem too high to become the object of aspiration.” And Principal Ottley says, “The highest object of hope for man is the perfection of his own nature,” — a perfection which, we must remember, can be attained in no other way than by broadening and deepening our life as Jesus did, with the loving service of our fellow-men. It is what Dr. Farrar means in saying, “Hope is faith in Christ directed to the future”; or, in other words, it is our longing to be Christ-like. It is what the apostle means in the text, “Reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”; since this high calling, this Christian ideal, signifies a life of self-forgetful, reverent love for all mankind. In this sense it is true that “we are saved by hope.” And such hope is a distinctive sentiment of Christianity; for no other religion has held out an ideal of limitless progress and has said to men, “Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect,” — a precept of which the meaning is explained by parallel words in another Gospel, “Be ye merciful as your Father also is merciful.” *For the perfection that Jesus required is a perfect love.*

But seldom is perfection of any kind attained, or even sought, without the goads of disappointment and trouble.

When Jenny Lind, the most admired of the famous vocalists of her time, at the age of twenty-one went to Paris to train her voice under a great teacher, her first trial was an utter failure. "You have no voice left," was the master's judgment. Never before and never after did she know such mental suffering. But she would not be discouraged. She studied hard for many weeks, urged on by the keenness of her disappointment, and at another trial she was accepted as a pupil and began her brilliant career. To this bitter discipline at the beginning she attributed her final success. And this which is true of artistic genius is just as true of personal and national character. If our life is easy and happy, we are apt to be selfish and content; but in suffering and disappointment and danger we learn our imperfections, new ideals dawn before us, great aspirations stir within us. Many a selfish life has been ennobled by grief and become a fountain of benefactions to others. Seldom has there lived any hero or saint who would not confess that he owed whatever greatness he had attained to experiences of struggle and sorrow. Even of Jesus it was said that he was "made perfect through sufferings." Both individuals and nations have thus been called to bear suffering and sorrow, so that they might awake to higher aims, until at last they have won the fulfilment of their noblest aspirations in being permitted to do something for the benefit of their fellow-men, and thus have entered into their true glory.

LOVE.

III. Then, finally, there is the privilege of love, which is greater than faith or hope, ("the greatest of these," says the Apostle,) because it is the perfection which faith adores in God and hope aspires to attain in our human life. But there are higher and lower kinds of love; and there are also feelings called by this name which are unworthy of the name. We sometimes, for instance, give the name to what is only

greed. Even the love of man for woman may be only a longing to have and to hold, as one's exclusive possession in the wedded tie, a lovely face and a graceful form,—as selfish a feeling as the wish to own a beautiful painting or a stately mansion. Then there are other forms of love, in some degree unselfish, to be sure, but often thoughtless of the rights of others and easily tempted to do heartless things. Parents, for instance, who seem to love their children, will yet at times consult their own pleasure rather than these children's welfare, or will disown and disinherit them for some disobedience or folly, which hurts the parents' pride, but does not make them long to forgive and save these children. It is a love that soon withers away under the hot sun of worldliness, like the seed that was sown in shallow ground. Then there is the feeble love that cannot bear the strain of long separation; we observe it in people, who, while they live near together, really think that they love one another, but, when they go apart to a distance, soon become indifferent. Then nobler than all these feelings is the love of which the poet speaks in the lines,

“Wisdom is meek sorrow's patient child,
And empire over self, and all the deep
Strong charities that make men seem like gods,”

a love which is like true faith and true hope, in that they are all the children of sorrow. In our sunny hours, indeed, we love our kindred, our neighbors, our friends, with an unselfish love; we share with them their joy, we go to their homes with glad congratulations; but, when we are called to sympathize with their griefs, when bereavement and pain and trouble open in our hearts the fountains of pity, does not our love flow out from unexpected depths with a wonderful glow like the outpouring of a new life? And, henceforth, though the pain or grief may pass away and the days may come and go with sunny joy, does not our love have a

depth and warmth which can never be quite lost and would be impossible but for these experiences of suffering and sorrow? Indeed, without these sympathies that are born of pain and grief, these "deep, strong charities" hallowed by pity, how little would human life be worth! Some natural affection, to be sure, would draw us together, just as it brings the beasts together; but we should know nothing of that tender helpfulness which gives to life its sweetest fragrance and makes us to one another forever afterward inexpressibly dear.

Nevertheless, this natural impulsive love, even when disciplined by suffering and sorrow, is not yet the Christian love which the Apostle praised,—the charity that "suffereth long," that "is not easily provoked," that "rejoiceth not in iniquity," that "beareth and believeth all things," and is "the bond of perfectness," "the end of the commandment," and "the fulfilling of the law." This Christian love, says Phillips Brooks, is "the love of humanity, grounded on the conviction which Christ implanted, that every man is the child of God." It implies a thoughtfulness of "the sanctity of all human life" and "the infinite value of the individual," a "reverential estimate of the human soul, without which," says Martineau, "no faith, no hope, no holy form of truth, is possible." When this spirit of reverence is added to sympathy, it transforms every lower form of love into the distinctively Christian love, the noblest kind of love, because it loves, not any superficial traits, but that which is deepest in human nature, "the hidden and possible saint in the sinner," says Principal Fairbairn of Oxford, the latent goodness in every man, which, though it be but a tiny spark, is God's real presence, ever worthy of our reverence. And such love, because it reverently recognizes the infinite moral possibilities of every soul and the infinite value of the soul in God's sight, feels secure of immortality. Indeed, this is

the one conclusive argument for immortality,—the argument on which Jesus rested his faith when he said that all live unto God.

From this reverence have sprung all distinctively Christian institutions. For instance, it is the mutual reverence of husband and wife as immortal souls, that hallows the wedded tie in Christendom, as it is hallowed nowhere else,—a reverence that teaches patience, tenderness, forgivingness, and created the Christian home. It is the mutual reverence of fellow-citizens, of the rich and the poor, of the wise and the weak, as all alike children of God, that, as Stopford Brooke has said, “is the foundation of all noble and enduring democracy,” and created the ideal of the Christian state—an ideal, which has never yet been fully realized, but is gradually transforming our modern world. It is reverence for the wayward and sinful, because in them there are possibilities of the highest goodness, the faith, says Martineau, “that the meanest is but the highest in the germ,” a faith, says Pfleiderer, “first brought about by Christianity,” that created our Christian philanthropy, the noblest of all philanthropies; for even Buddhist philanthropy lacks just this reverence, does not see the infinite possibilities of human nature and the divine ministry of suffering and sorrow for the spiritual training of mankind, and therefore is more concerned to remove the sufferings of human life than to promote the spiritual growth of human souls. It is humane; and yet it lacks true love, just because it lacks true faith. Christian love, on the other hand, is more concerned about the spiritual needs of men; as far as is possible and wise, it mitigates and consoles; but it accepts the inevitable sufferings of life with courage and faith, for it has learned the great lessons of the Cross.

We might naturally infer that no one, not even the Christ, could fully apprehend the meaning of this noblest love but

by experiences of suffering and sorrow, and, when we carefully read the gospel story, we find some reason to think that this was true in even the life of Jesus. For in the Sermon on the Mount we find no teaching of such a love as is taught in the fifteenth chapter of Luke. There is not the least expression of interest in the publicans and sinners. But the love that from the first had cared for those who were sick and suffering in body soon began to reach out to those who were in spiritual need; and, after Matthew, the publican, "forsook all and followed him," there were many publicans and sinners in his company. A little later he was called "the friend of publicans and sinners"; for his kindness drew these outcasts to him, wakening a hunger for better things and finding unsuspected treasures of goodness in men and women whom respectable people abhorred. When at length he was forced to flee from Galilee, and, after wandering awhile in Gentile districts, began the last sad journey to Jerusalem, his love became more tenderly sympathetic for those who, like him, were despised and rejected,—they, because they were so evil; he, because he was so good. At last he framed the three exquisite parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Lost Son, to justify the ever-deepening humanity of his ministry by proclaiming a novel truth about God's relations to mankind and our own duties to one another. For in the discipline of trouble and disappointment his heart was taught what no saint or sage had ever learned, that man is always God's child, still dear to the Infinite Heart, and still having divine possibilities of goodness within him, though apparently lost like the sheep and the coin and the wayward boy; and that, therefore, these degraded men and women have a holy, imperative claim upon us for reverent pity, trust, and love.

"It is the deepest idea of Jesus," says Stopford Brooke,

“that, because all are children of God, to give up one’s self for others is the true life.” But he could not have fully apprehended this idea until he clearly saw that he himself was called by the providence of God to “suffer many things and be rejected,” and “to give his life a ransom for many.” Thus he was “made perfect” in his love “through sufferings”; and he entered into the depths of sorrow, that he might teach more persuasively the all-embracing and redeeming love of God and draw all men together in the ties of a holy brotherhood. *Out of suffering came the gospel which alone has power to save.*

In his early ministry he had spoken of God’s *benevolent* love, as sending the bounties of nature impartially to the good and the evil, and with a like impartial benevolence forgiving our trespasses; but he said nothing of a *redeeming* love which would “save that which is lost,” till, disappointed and defeated, he is going to Jerusalem to die. The Sermon on the Mount teaches only that God is ready to forgive us when we ourselves are in a forgiving spirit toward our fellow-men. Reconciliation must begin with our own seeking after God,—a doctrine which is distinctively Jewish. But in his later ministry Jesus taught that God is trying to awaken in us this forgiving spirit by the revelations of His love for which the Cross has stood to us, and so to redeem us from our unforgiving spirit and all our sinfulness; that God has always been seeking us, even when we seemed to be far away from Him, as the shepherd sought his wandering sheep,—which is the distinctively Christian doctrine of “grace.”

He began his ministry as a Jewish rabbi; he ended it as one who would be the Saviour of all mankind. In the Sermon on the Mount he reaffirmed the noblest doctrines of the Hebrew prophets; yet his aim was chiefly ethical,—an appeal for sincerity and reality of character, and a call for a

great reform in Israel. But he soon saw that his nation needed, not law, so much as love,—not new precepts, so much as a new enthusiasm,—not ethics, so much as a reverent, self-sacrificing interest in every fellow-man as an immortal child of God; and that such a love would renovate the world as no mere ethics without the Christian enthusiasm could do. His distinctive gospel was the announcement of *the divine power of such a perfect love* by which a human life reveals the heart of God,—as it was also the gospel that was afterward preached by Paul, who understood the spirit of the Master and the true meaning of his religion far better than the other leaders of the Early Church.

It was the good news for which the world was waiting, but which even to-day the world does not half understand and the Church has often misrepresented,—the good news which was implied in the Apostle's praise of "charity" and his insistence that love is the fulfilling of the law, as truly as it was taught in the parable of the Prodigal Son and in all the Master's ministry of service. And because he was so loyal to this gospel of a perfect love, even when it caused his tragic death, he has been exalted to a throne far above all other thrones and entered into his glory.

Such faith, hope, and love sum up the essence of his religion; for, while rites and dogmas suffer change, beliefs which once were thought essential lose their power, "prophecies fail," and "knowledge," like that which theology claims, "shall vanish away," these three abide. Whosoever, then, lives in such faith, hope, and love, is a true disciple. No other creed can be required. All Christians are united in the Universal Church by this threefold cord. And by such faith, hope, and love shall at last this world be redeemed from its sin and suffering and enter into its glory.

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IS GOING TO CHURCH A DUTY?

BY

REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE, D.D.



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APR 12 1917

IS GOING TO CHURCH A DUTY?

This is the question which I am going to try to answer; and my text you will find in the fourteenth chapter of Romans, at the seventh verse: "For none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself."

A duty is something which is due, something which we owe and ought, so far as possible, to pay. The nature and extent of our obligations to our fellow-men, it seems to me, are rarely considered sufficiently to be adequately understood. How much and what do I owe to humanity? Literally everything,—everything I have, everything I am; and this is so literally and so simply true that no man has a right to say, "I will do as I please with my possessions, my time, or my powers."

Consider for a minute. Suppose I have a strong and fair body. Where did I get it? Is it mine in the sense that I have a right to be proud of it, and that I may do as I please with my physical strength? The long struggle and effort of the race in every stage of its evolution, from brute towards angel, has evolved whatever is fine and fair in the human form; and it is an outright gift to me, whatever of it I may have or say I own.

How about the brain? Perhaps I am more than usually intelligent, or have some remarkable brain power. Is that mine? (When I say "I," I am merely

speaking for all the rest of you, as you will understand.) Is this mine? The human race from the beginning, again, has been developing, creating the human brain. When men have thought, and tried to think straight and clear, they have been creating brain cells as much as the athlete in his exercises creates lung cells. Whatever mental ability I have, then, is an outright gift to me.

How about my conscience, my sense of right? Again, that is the result of the age-long evolution of the human race. How about my religious liberty and opportunities, my high and fine aspirations to reverence and worship? Again, the human race from the beginning has been religious according to its light, as best it has been able; and it has developed all that is high and fine in the religious life of the world, and has conveyed it as an outright gift to me.

Our religious liberty! Every man that has dared to speak in the face of the opposition of his time, every man who has gone to prison or the stake, all who have been consecrated to the high and noble, have been those who have transmitted to me the priceless heritage which I enjoy to-day.

Suppose I am a remarkable business man, have unusual power, shrewdness; put me anywhere you please, I am able to see the situation and control it. Am I to pride myself on that, and say, if I accumulate a large amount of money as the result of it, I may do as I please with it? No! Where did you get your business ability? Again, this is a heritage, an outright gift of the race; and the opportunity, the business chance of which you have taken advantage, every discovery, every invention, everything that has made the race able to conquer and civilize

the earth ; all that has put its forces within our control, every telegraph wire, every ship that sails the sea,—all these things that have created the present condition of interdependence and interchange among nations have given me my opportunity. These, again, are outright gifts, the result of the age-long struggle and effort of man.

So there is simply and literally nothing that I am or have that I do not owe. No man has any right, then, to stand apart, in isolation and attempted independence, and say, “I will live as I please, and let the old world wag as it will.” You are responsible for the way the old world wags, and under the highest conceivable obligation to do what you can to make things what they ought to be.

One step more, and we shall be ready to find ourselves face to face with a consideration of our relation to the Church. There are a good many ways in which I can serve people ; but, if I serve them in the highest things, I serve them most effectively and in the best possible way.

Take, for example, the training of a child. I may train a child to be dependent upon somebody else at every step ; but I may be able to appoint guardians and to lay up provision for him in such a way that there shall not be an hour of his life long when every wish may not be attended to. But, if I train my child in such a way that he becomes master of himself, his own faculties and powers, and is able to make provision for himself, do I not do better by him ? In that way I not only satisfy indirectly his wants and needs, but I make a man of him, which is infinitely more important.

So you may help a man who is hungry. You give

him something to eat ; but, if that is all, you must give him something to-morrow, next week, next year, and perhaps until the end of his life. You make him dependent. But, if you can train him, appeal to his self-respect, create in him a high ideal as to what it means to be a man, call out all the latent forces and faculties of his nature, you render him an unspeakably higher service. So if I can serve men in the best way, I render them the most effective and lasting benefit.

We are now ready to face the question of our relation to the Church, and the question as to whether or not there is any duty about it. The title I announced was, "Is going to Church a Duty?" Of course, "going to church" is simply a general term to cover our whole relation to the Church. Ought we to belong to the Church, consecrate ourselves to its service?

Let us see. What is the highest obligation resting upon a man? So far as he personally is concerned, it is that he shall be a man, with all that that implies. What is it to be a man? To be a fine animal? The finer animal you can be, the better ; but that is not being a man. Cultivate and develop your intellectual power to any extent you please, but that is not all, nor is it the highest.

Herbert Spencer has dwelt, in his last volume, with a great deal of insistent emphasis on the idea that we do not necessarily make people better because we make them know more. He says that the advancement of moralization does not necessarily keep step with the work of intellectualization. If you teach a man to be wise and shrewd, and he has no conscience or character, you only make the more efficient scoundrel of him ; that is all.

So intellectual development is not enough ; and in-

tellectual development may be purely and simply selfish. The man who shuts himself up in his library, keeps himself away from his fellow-men, cares only to enjoy his books, may be as selfish as the man who lives only for the saloon, may cut himself off as completely from any vital and helpful relations with his fellow-men. Intellectual development, then, is not enough.

If you cultivate your æsthetic side until you appreciate and admire everything that is beautiful in nature and art, you may not even then transcend that which is purely selfish, you may not come up into that which is highest and most characteristic of your manhood. A man is what? He is a child of God. He is a soul. He is a spiritual being.

I do not mean now to dogmatize on theological matters. Do not understand the terms I am using from that point of view. The highest and finest thing in a man is love, sympathy, tenderness, pity, helpfulness. No matter what your theological ideas may be, no matter whether you believe in God or the future life or not, so much is true. The highest and most characteristic thing in a man is this which we call spiritual. And, when we say that a man ought to be a man, it means that he ought to climb up and live in these ranges of his being.

Any creature ought to be what it can be. We buy a singing bird, and it does not sing. We feel that we are being cheated. A horse that is destined for the race-course, we say, ought to be able to run. A dray horse may be simply strong and well trained. A pointer dog must point. A setter dog must set. We claim that a creature ought to be what it is called and capable of being. A man ought to come up and live

in the spiritual ranges of his being. If he does not, he is not a man, is not true to the highest and noblest conception of his being.

Can a man do this alone? Can he do it out of relation to his fellow-men? Can he go into his library or into the woods, and do it? Can he do it simply on his own account? To ask the question is to answer it. A magnet might as well be a magnet, and not attract anything. A river might as well be called a river, when it is unable with the onward rush of its waters to turn the wheels of a mill that is adapted to their power. The sun is a sun only as it shines. A man, then, is a man, in the highest and truest sense of the word, only as he cultivates the highest and finest qualities that make him a spiritual being; and these are the ones which of necessity relate him vitally and helpfully to his fellow-men.

You cannot love and sympathize and be tender and helpful all by yourself, and with nobody to love, with whom to sympathize, towards whom you are to be helpful. The very fact of cultivating these things, which constitute you in the highest and truest sense of the word a man, of necessity put you in vital and helpful relation to your fellow-men.

What then? The Church is the only organization on the face of the earth that has this cultivation of manhood, this development of the highest and most essential characteristics of men and women, as its one essential aim. The Church exists for this. It is a place where these faculties and powers are appealed to, where they are called out and developed, where they are directed and brought into play. This is what the Church is for; and there is no other organization in all the wide world the one aim and end and

object of which is to make manhood and womanhood.

I do not mean to say that a man cannot cultivate these qualities and not go into a church during the whole length of his life ; I do not say that he cannot be such a man and not become united with any ecclesiastical organization ; but I do say this : he must cultivate those qualities and faculties in him, and he must live the kind of life that the Church exists to cultivate and help him attain. So he must, if he do not link himself with any outside and visible Church, *be* what the Church is for. He cannot escape it.

So that the essential truth of our contention remains ; and, if a man with difficulty lives this kind of life without associating himself with those of us who are trying to live it, he admits the supremacy of those things for which the Church stands and which constitute it what it is.

Another point. We do not believe any longer in those conceptions of God and the future life which used to make it the one great end and aim of the Church to save the soul from the wrath of God in another life. There was no trouble in getting people to go to church in the old days, when everybody believed that the Church was the one means by which their souls could be saved from eternal wrath.

If a man is drowning and a boat puts out to his rescue, it does not require a great deal of eloquence to persuade him to get aboard. But this idea of the Church has passed away. People no longer believe in that kind of punishment in another life, or that the Church under any of its forms has exclusive power to save men from that kind of wrath of God.

But does it follow, therefore, that we do not need

any preparation for that other life? I believe we need preparation quite as definite and distinct and earnestly pursued as men supposed themselves to need in the days gone by. I believe neither in rewards nor punishments in this world or in any other, using those words in their arbitrary sense; but I believe with my whole soul in results in this world and in all others, believe there is no other one thing so essentially urged and uttered by our modern scientific conception of the universe as this,—the inevitable connection between cause and effect, in this world and in every world.

What then? Go on and pass through the shadow, and issue, as I believe, into that other life which is the next step beyond this. Does it make no difference whether I am ready for it or not? As an illustration, suppose you were liable to be caught up by some force that was beyond your control, carried on board a ship, and compelled to sail for some other country. Suppose you were liable to this at any minute. Would it be of no concern to you to know what you could about that country, to understand something of its manners and customs, to learn, if you could, the speech of its people, so that, when you got there, you would not be entirely out of your element?

I believe in that other country. I believe—yea, I know—that, if that other country exists, the qualities, the faculties, powers, that will come into play there, are these of which I have been speaking,—love, tenderness, sympathy, pity, helpfulness. It will be the spiritual man that will live there; and so I believe that it is of the utmost importance for us to cultivate and develop our spiritual natures here day by day, so that, when we take that next step, we shall

come into a familiar land, and one for which we have prepared ourselves and where we shall feel at home.

Take another illustration. A Harvard graduate,—or Yale or Columbia; no matter of what university,—does it make no difference whether he attends to his business, makes himself familiar with his text-books, develops himself in every way he can during his college career? Suppose, if he does not do so, he knows that, when he gets out of college, he is not going to be beaten or clubbed or put into prison, that no one is going to inflict corporal punishment upon him, or torture him,—suppose he knew that, would it make no difference whether he did or did not? Would it be of no importance on the day of graduation as to whether or not he had trained himself so as to be ready for life?

So I believe that this is a training school,—this world. We are here getting ready for life; and it makes all the difference in the world, when the time comes, when the door is opened and we step out into that other room in the great Father's house, as to whether we are ready for it or not. And the way to get ready,—not the old way, not placating God's wrath,—the way to get ready is not something magical, something disconnected from the kind of life we are leading here: it is just living this life as we ought, in the noblest and highest and finest things that are in us.

In that way we are helping on the development through which this human race is passing, from brute to angel, and getting ready for angelic fellowship and an angelic career,—the simplest thing in the world, and at the same time one of the most important.

And, again, the Church is the only institution on the

face of the earth that is specially and entirely devoted to this one thing. The churches are not perfect, they are made out of the kind of people who live in the places where they are organized : they have to be. But the ideal, the aim, the purpose, the end, of the Church, is the finest and highest of which we can conceive. For there is nothing better, can be nothing better, than to help people think and feel and love and worship and live ; and that is what the Church is for.

One other thing let me hint just in passing. A side issue, if you choose, and yet one so intensely important that I feel it to be a part of my theme. First or last, all of us have to meet great sorrows. Young people, some of them, have not yet tasted these sorrows ; and the words I speak have no special meaning to them. But those of you who are older know that it is universal, that there is no escape. We lose father, mother, brother, sister, friend, husband, wife, or child. We lose those dearer to us than life.

This is an experience from which no one escapes. It is a strange voyage we have started out on. No matter what the nature of the ship,—a great merchant ship,—a man-of-war, a pleasure-boat, a little pinnace, a canoe, no matter what,—every craft afloat on this sea of life is doomed to go down before it reaches any visible harbor. Is not that a strange arrangement ?

What does it mean ? Does it mean pessimism, the loss of all heart and faith, that there is no meaning or purpose in life, that either God is a devil or does not exist or does not care ? Does it mean these things ? I do not believe it. I believe that every ship that sinks sinks to another sea, and sails on to some port as

yet invisible to us, but finer than anything of which we can dream. I believe the apostle's words, that "it has not yet entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that God hath prepared for them that love him."

When these experiences come,—and, as I have said, they come to all of us,—what shall we do? Shall we lose heart, "curse God and die," mourn our hearts out, wrap ourselves up selfishly in our personal griefs, and leave the world to its sorrows? What shall we do? I believe that the hopes and thoughts and aspirations and inspirations which the Church stands for have the only sane and divine answer.

The Church stands as a witness to the Fatherhood of God, his eternal love and care; and, if I may believe that,—and I do believe it,—then let my ship sink. Let the ships of my friends go down. That is not the end. The end is just over there, beyond the shadow, in a light that shines from a sun that shall nevermore go down. The human heart, then, in its great exigencies of sorrow and despair, needs, if it may rationally have it, this hope and help for which the Church stands and of which it is an eternal witness.

But now I come to a more practical—as perhaps some of you may think—side of my theme. No matter whether anything I have thus far said in regard to the special phases of this subject be true or not, let us consider another side of our great theme.

As we look over this world, we find all sorts of things out of joint,—in the business world, the social world, the political world; injustice, selfishness, cruelty, wrong, suffering, such as does not need to exist, because it is the suffering which men inflict on each

other. And let me suggest to you right here, in passing, that, if we could eliminate from the problem of human suffering all that for which we ourselves are responsible, what would be left would be so slight and so apparently necessary and of the nature of things that it would constitute no problem which would trouble us as to our faith in the good government of the world.

The great evils of the world are caused by human selfishness, ignorance, greed, cruelty, the determination of particular people to have their own way without any regard to the consequences to any one else. Now how are we going to help this condition of things? Some claim that it is to be remedied by the newspapers. The newspapers are doing a great deal to civilize and Christianize the world, but I leave you to adjust their claim according to your own personal conviction. A large part of the newspapers so preponderantly deal with the evil side of human life as to discourage and dismay instead of give help and strength and cheer.

The public schools, we used to think, were going to redeem the world, and make everything what it ought to be; but we have learned that vice and crime remain even in those places where public education has been carried. And, to recall to your mind again what I said a few moments ago, the best authorities of the world are beginning to recognize that intellectual cultivation and development, and the cultivation and development of moral character, are not necessarily the same, that the one may be carried to almost any extent without any commensurate effect being produced upon the other.

During the time of the French Revolution the

people seemed to have the idea that, if they could only sweep the kings and nobles from the face of the earth, and establish the doctrines of equality and of liberty, all would be well. There was a school of philosophers who taught that all the evil in human society was the result of these artificial distinctions and conditions, that it was caste and class which were responsible.

But the French Republic has been established. On all its buildings throughout Paris there are the words "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." But is France at peace? Is there no more vice and crime, no more evil, in France? We had a dream in the early days of our republic that we were going to create an ideal condition of things here in this country. But every little while we are compelled to wake up and recognize the fact that evil and injustice and selfishness and greed exist, and play their part of havoc and destruction just as of old; for human nature is very much the same.

I do not mean by this that the world has not been growing slowly better. I believe it has, from the beginning, and that there never was a time in the history of the world when, on the whole, men and women were so good as they are to-day. But—now I come to the very point—what is the secret of whatever good we find in human nature, and why is it that the evils persist? Socialists, still dreaming the old dream which haunted the people at the time of the French Revolution,—only they have changed the form of it,—tell us that, if we could only reconstruct society, poverty and vice and crime and all these things would be done away.

But just consider, friends, the fundamental princi-

ples involved. Here are twelve people. Rearrange the relations in which they stand to each other just as much as you please. Have you changed *them*? If not, then the same old passions, the same old ignorance, greed, the same old forces of every kind, will come into play again, and, modified a little by the changed conditions of affairs, produce substantially the same results.

You never will get a perfect society until you get some perfect men and women of which to make it; and whatever perfection there may be will be the perfection, not of the organization, but the perfection of the individual men and women, whatever the organization may be.

Take the condition of things to-day in the industrial world. Let me recur once more to the coal strike in Pennsylvania. What was the matter? On the one hand were certain capitalists, owners, managers of railways, organized for what? Chiefly to have their own way. On the other hand there were a hundred and fifty thousand miners, organized for what? Chiefly, again, to have their own way. If the managers on both sides had desired to be fair, to be just, to arrange things so that mutually they should be benefited just as much as the condition of things would allow, if they were true and noble and unselfish men, the matter might have been settled in twenty-four hours.

There is no intellectual problem that the wit of man might not solve. It is merely the prejudice and selfishness and anger and hate; it is that these qualities of the evil side of human nature were so dominant that they would not permit them to get together on the basis of a common human brotherhood that cared first to serve God the Father, and help their fellow-men.

And so in every department of life, in business, in society. If we could only learn the fundamental facts which the Church stands for and tries to teach,—that God is our Father and that all we are brethren, and that the differences of rank, education, possession, culture, and refinement are differences, not of essential manhood and womanhood at all, but differences of favoritism, that have been created and conferred upon us ; if we would only come to understand that, and deal with men and women as men and women, for the sake of helping and lifting up their manhood and womanhood,—all these evils would slough off and fall away.

The thing we need to-day in society, in the industrial and political worlds, more than everything else put together, is simply straight out, upright, down-right manhood.

To make the world right, we need to make you right and me right, that is all. Every one of these difficulties and disturbances can be settled and arranged if only you will be what you ought to be and I will be what I ought to be. And there is no other way of getting at it.

Political rearrangements will not perfect the result. New laws will not perfect the result. Law is one of the most clumsy bits of machinery on the face of the earth ; and the best laws in the world are no better in their effect than the people who make them and either obey or disobey them. You cannot carry out and put into effect any laws that the people do not believe in or want made efficient.

So it comes back to this one question of personal character, nothing else. Here, again, the Church—let me say it once more, and emphasize it with all the

power of which I am capable—is the only institution in the world that exists for the sake of creating character, that has no other object, that lives to make manhood and womanhood. Inasmuch, then, as this is the one great crying need of the world, you who wish to help the world must help the Church. At any rate, whether you join any particular church or not, you must help do the work for which the Church stands. You cannot escape it if you would be true to God, yourself, and your fellow-men.

Now at the end. What church will you join or belong to or help on? I am not pleading for this church or the Unitarian Church as such. I am pleading for the active, consecrated, religious life,—that is what I am pleading for. But you can help it on better by connecting yourself with some visible organization. Now what one?

In the first place I would advise every man to have some convictions. Then I would advise him to connect himself with that church which best represents his earnest and honest conviction.

And do not let any small or slight thing stand in the way. I know people who do not go to the church where they belong because of convenience, because friends go somewhere else, because they have married into some other kind of church, because the church is a good ways off and it is not quite easy, because they do not happen to like the music, because they are not quite satisfied with the preacher,—for one of a thousand things that are of no consequence at all when brought face to face with the real principles involved.

I am amazed at the silly childishness of men and women sometimes. I had a parishioner in Boston.

He claimed to care for me, to be devoted to the principles of the Church; but he left the Church and left me, proved false to God and his duty to his fellow-men, because he got mad over something connected with the management of the choir. I know people who get angry and leave the church because an unfamiliar usher puts a stranger in their seat. I mention these as illustrations. All sorts of silly, childish reasons keep a man from being a man, from being true to God, to his minister, to his fellow-men. No true man will be false to these eternal and far-reaching considerations for some little tiny whim like that.

Suppose the minister is not brilliant or brilliant every Sunday: the Church is not a lecture association. You should not go to church because the minister entertains you: that is not what the Church is for. The Church is an organization of men and women trying to lead a high, noble, religious, spiritual life. It is an organization to work in the city, to lift the life of the city; and you join it for the sake of that work.

It is not a concert; and you do not go because you like the music. That is not what the Church is for. The Church is an organization to do something; and you belong to it for the sake of accomplishing these high and grand things for which it exists.

Find out, then, what church best represents the ideas you believe in, then consecrate yourselves to its service, and do not let matters of convenience, because you happen to be tired on Saturday night or it is cloudy Sunday morning, stand in the way of this great and noble and faithful service to your fellow-men.

I do not know any reason in the world why the

minister has not just as much right to stay at home Sunday morning, when it rains, as anybody else. If it is anybody's duty to make the Church efficient for the sake of helping the world, then it is every man's duty to do it; equally his duty. I repudiate that idea of my relation to God and my fellow-men which makes it one whit different from that in which all of you stand. Consecrate yourselves to this high service to your fellows, and feel that the grandest thing you can do is to co-operate with God in helping to make the world better.

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BY

REV. WILLIAM C. GANNETT, D.D.

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WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

APR 12 1917

BLESSED BE DRUDGERY!

I.

Of every two men probably one man thinks he is a drudge, and every second woman at times is *sure* she is. Either we are not doing the thing we would like to do in life ; or, in what we do and like, we find so much to dislike that the rut tires even when the road runs on the whole a pleasant way. So I am going to speak of the *Culture that comes through this very Drudgery*.

“Culture through my drudgery !” some one now is thinking. “This tread-mill that has worn me out, this grind I hate, this plod that, as long ago as I remember it, seemed tiresome,—to this have I owed ‘culture’ ? Keeping house, or keeping accounts, tending babies, teaching primary school, weighing sugar and salt at the counter, those blue overalls in the machine-shop,—have these anything to do with ‘culture’ ? Culture takes leisure, elegance, wide margins of time, a pocket-book : drudgery means limitations, coarseness, crowded hours, chronic worry, old clothes, black hands, head-aches. Culture implies college : life allows a daily paper, a monthly magazine, the circulating library, and two gift-books at Christmas. Our real and our ideal are not twins : never were ! I want the books,—but the clothes-basket wants me. The two children are good,—and so would be two hours a day without the children. I crave an outdoor life,—and walk down town of morn-

ings to perch on a high stool till supper-time. I love Nature, and figures are my fate. My taste is books, and I farm it. My taste is art, and I correct exercises. My taste is science, and I measure tape. I am young and like stir : the business jogs on like a stage-coach. Or I am *not* young, I am getting gray over my ears, and like to sit down and be still ; but the drive of the business keeps both tired arms stretched out full length. I hate this overbidding and this underselling, this spry, unceasing competition, and would willingly give up a quarter of my profits to have two hours of my daylight to myself—at least I would if, working as I do, I did not barely get the children bread and clothes. I did not choose my calling, but was dropped into it—by my innocent conceit ; or by duty to the family ; or by a parent's foolish pride ; or by our hasty marriage ; or a mere accident wedged me into it. Would I could have my life over again ! Then, whatever I *should* be, at least I would *not* be what I am to-day !”

Have I spoken truly for any one here ? I know I have. Goes not the grumble thus within the silent breast of many a person, whose pluck never lets it escape to words like these, save now and then of a tired evening to husband or to wife ?

There is often truth and justice in the grumble. Truth and justice, both. Still, when the question rises through the grumble, Can it be that this drudgery, not to be escaped, gives “culture” ? the true answer is,—Yes, and culture of the prime elements of life ; of the very fundamentals of all fine manhood and fine womanhood.

Our *prime* elements are due to our drudgery,—I mean that literally ; the *fundamentals*, that underlie all

fineness, and without which no other culture worth the winning is even possible. These, for instance,—and what names are more familiar? Power of attention, power of industry, promptitude in beginning work, method and accuracy and despatch in doing work; perseverance, courage before difficulties, cheer under straining burdens, self-control and self-denial and temperance. These are the prime qualities; these the fundamentals. We have heard these names before! When we were small, Mother had a way of harping on them, and Father joined in occasionally, and the minister used to refer to them in church. And this was what our first employer meant: only his way of putting the matter was, “Look sharp, my boy!” “Be on time, John!” “Stick to it!” Yes, that is just what they all meant; these *are* the very qualities which the mothers tried to tuck into us when they tucked us into bed, the very qualities which the ministers pack into their platitudes, and which the nations pack into their proverbs. And that goes to *show* that they are the fundamentals. Reading, writing, and arithmetic are very handy, but these fundamentals of a man are handier to have; worth more; worth more than Latin and Greek and French and German and music and art-history and painting and wax flowers and travels in Europe, added together. All these are the decorations of a man or woman: even reading and writing are but conveniences: those other things are the *Indispensables*. They make one’s sit-fast strength, and one’s active momentum, whatsoever and wheresoever the lot in life be,—be it wealth or poverty, city or country, library or workshop. Those qualities make the solid substance of one’s self.

And the question I would ask myself and you is,

How do we get them? How do they become ours? High school and college can give much, but these are never on their programmes. All the book-processes that we go to the schools for, and commonly call "our education," give no more than *opportunity* to win the Indispensables of education. How, then, do we get them? We get them somewhat as the fields and valleys get their grace. Whence is it that the lines of river and meadow and hill and lake and shore conspire to-day to make the landscape beautiful? Only by long chisellings and steady pressures. Only by ages of glacier-crush and grind, by scour of floods, by centuries of storm and sun. These rounded the hills, and scooped the valley-curves, and mellowed the soil for meadow-grace. There was little grace in the operation, had we been there to watch. It was "drudgery" all over the land. Mother Nature was down on her knees doing her early scrubbing-work? That was yesterday: to-day, result of scrubbing-work, we have the laughing landscape.

Now what is true of the earth is true of each man and woman on the earth. Father and mother and the ancestors before them have done much to bequeath those elemental qualities to us; but that which scrubs them into us, the clinch which makes them actually ours, and keeps them ours, and adds to them as the years go by,—that depends on our own plod, our plod in the rut, our drill of habit; in one word, depends upon our "drudgery." It is because we have to go, and *go*, morning after morning, through rain, through shine, through tooth-ache, head-ache, heart-ache to the appointed spot and do the appointed work; because, and only because, we have to stick to that work through the eight or the ten hours, long

after rest would be so sweet ; because the school-boy's lesson must be learnt at nine o'clock and learnt without a slip ; because the accounts on the ledger must square to a cent ; because the goods must tally exactly with the invoice ; because good temper must be kept with children, customers, neighbors, not seven times, but seventy times seven times ; because the besetting sin must be watched to-day, to-morrow, and the next day : in short, — without much matter *what* our work be, whether this or that, it is because, and only because, of the rut, plod, grind, humdrum *in* the work, that we at last get those self-foundations laid of which I spoke, — attention, promptness, accuracy, firmness, patience, self-denial, and the rest. When I think over that list and seriously ask myself three questions, I have to answer each with *No*: (1) Are there any qualities in the list which I can afford to spare, to go without, as mere show-qualities? Not one. (2) Can I get them, get these self-foundations laid, save by the weight, year in, year out, of the steady pressures? No, there is no other way. (3) Is there a single one in the list which I cannot get in some degree by undergoing the steady drills and pressures? No, not one. Then beyond all books, beyond all class-work at the school, beyond all special opportunities of what I call my "education," it is this drill and pressure of my daily task, that is my great schoolmaster. *My daily task*, whatever it be, *that is what mainly educates me*. All other culture is mere luxury compared with what that gives. That gives the Indispensables. Yet, fool that I am, this pressure of my daily task is the very thing that I so growl at as my "Drudgery"!

We can add right here this fact, and practically it is a very important fact to girls and boys as

ambitious as they ought to be,—the higher our ideals, the *more* we need those foundation habits strong. The street-cleaner can better afford to drink and laze than he who would make good shoes ; and to make good shoes takes less force of character and brain than to make cures in the sick-room, or laws in the legislature, or children in the nursery. The man who makes the head of a pin or the split of a pen all day long, and the man who must put fresh thought into his work at every stroke,—which of the two more needs the self-control, the method, the accuracy, the power of attention and concentration ? Do you sigh for books and leisure and wealth ? It takes more “concentration” to use books—head-tools—well than to use hand-tools. It takes more “self-control” to use leisure well than work days. Compare the Sundays and Mondays of your city : which day, all things considered, stands for the city’s higher life,—the day on which so many men are lolling, and so many women dressing, or the day on which all toil ? It takes more knowledge, more integrity, more justice, to handle riches well than to bear the healthy pinch of the just-enough.

Do you think that the great and famous escape drudgery ? The native power and temperament, the capital at birth, the outfit, counts for much, but it convicts us common minds of huge mistake to hear the uniform testimony of the more successful geniuses about their genius. “Genius is patience,” said who ? Sir Isaac Newton. “The Prime Minister’s secret is patience,” said who ? Mr. Pitt, the great Prime Minister of England. Who, think you, wrote, “My imagination would never have served me as it has, but for the habit of commonplace, humble,

patient, daily, toiling, drudging attention"? It was Charles Dickens. Who said, "The secret of a Wall-street million is common honesty"? Vanderbilt; and he added as the recipe for a million (I know somebody would like to hear it), "Never use what is not your own, never buy what you cannot pay for, never sell what you haven't got." How simple great men's rules are! How easy it is to be a great man! Order, diligence, patience, honesty,—just what you and I must use to put our dollar in the savings-bank, to do our school-boy sum, to keep the farm thrifty, and the house clean, and the babies neat. Order, diligence, patience, honesty! There is wide difference between men, but truly it lies less in some special gift or opportunity vouchsafed to one and withheld from another,—less in that than in the differing degree in which these common elements of human power are owned and used. Not how much talent have I, but how much will to use the talent that I have, is the main question. Not how much do I know, but how much do I do with what I know? To do their great work the great ones need more of the very same habits which the little ones need to do their smaller work. Goethe, Spenser, Agassiz, Jesus, share, not achievements, but conditions of achievement, with you and me. And those conditions for them as for us are largely the plod, the drill, the long disciplines of toil. And, if we ask such men their secret, they will uniformly tell us so.

Now since we lay the firm substrata of ourselves in this way, and only in this way; and since the higher we aim, the more, and not the less, we need these firm substrata,—since this is so, I think we ought to make up our minds and our mouths to sing a hal-

lelujah unto Drudgery : *Blessed be Drudgery*,—the one thing that we cannot spare !

II.

But there's something else to be said. Among the people here, or that half of us who are drudges, and to whom I am talking, there are some who have given up their dreams of what, when younger, they used to talk or think about as their "ideals"; and have grown at last resigned, if not content, to do the actual work before them. Yes, here it is,—before us, and behind us, and on all sides of us; we cannot change it; we have accepted it. Still, we have not given up one dream,—the dream of *success* in this work to which we are so clamped. If we cannot win the well-beloved one, then success with the ill-beloved,—this at least is left to hope for. Success and time may make *it* well-beloved, too,—who knows? Well, the secret of this Success still lies in the same old word, "Drudgery." For drudgery is the doing of one thing, one thing, one thing, long after it ceases to be amusing; and it is this "one thing I do" that gathers me together from my chaos, that concentrates me from possibilities to powers. That whole long string of habits—attention, method, patience, self-control, and the others—can be rolled up and balled, as it were, in the word "concentration." "One thing I do," said Paul; and, apart from what his one thing was, in that phrase he gave the watchword of salvation. We will halt a moment over it, for—

"I give you the end of a golden string.
Only wind it into a ball,—
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate
Built in Jerusalem's wall."

Men may be divided into two classes, those who have a "one thing," and those who have no "one thing" to do ; those with aim, and those without aim, in their lives : and practically it turns out that almost all of the success, and therefore the greater part of the happiness, go to the first class. The aim in life is what the backbone is in the body ; without it we are invertebrate, belong to some lower order of being not yet man. No wonder that the great question, therefore, with a young man is, What am I to be ? and that the future looks rather gloomy until the life-path opens. The lot of many a girl, especially of many a girl with a rich father, is a tragedy of aimlessness. Social standards, and her lack of true ideals and of real education, have condemned her to be frittered : from twelve years old she is a cripple to be pitied, and about thirty she comes to know it. With the brothers the blame is more their own. The boys we used to play our school-games with have found their places ; they are winning homes and influence and money, and, what is more, their natures are growing strong and shapely, and their days filling with the happy sense of accomplishment,—while *we* do not yet know what we are, and have no meaning on the earth. Lose us, and the earth has lost nothing ; no niche is empty, no force has ceased to play ; for we have got no aim, and therefore we are still—nobody. *Get your meaning*, first of all ; and ask the question till it is answered past question, What am I ? What do I stand for ? What name do I bear in the register of forces ? In our national cemeteries there are rows on rows of unknown bodies of our soldiers. They have done a work, and to their lives have put a meaning, by which they are remembered in homes where the

mother and the townsmen say, "He died in the war, although it's not known where." But the men and women whose lives are aimless, reverse their fate. Our *bodies* are known, and answer in this world to such or such a name,—but as to our inner *selves*, with real and awful meaning these walking bodies might be labelled, "An unknown man sleeps here !"

Now, since it is concentration that prevents this tragedy of failure, and since this concentration always involves Drudgery, long, hard, abundant, we have to own again, I think, that that is even more than what I called it first,—our chief schoolmaster ; besides that, Drudgery is the gray Angel of Success. The main secret of any success we may hope to rejoice in, is in that Angel's keeping. Look at the leaders in the professions, the "solid" men in business, the master-workmen who begin as poor boys and end by building a town to house their factory-hands ; they are drudges of the single aim. The man of science, and to-day more than ever, if he would add to the world's knowledge or even get a reputation, must be, in some one branch at least, a plodding specialist. The great inventors, Palissy at his pots, Goodyear at his rubber, Elias Howe at his sewing-machine, tell the secret,— "One thing I do." The reformer's secret is the same. A one-eyed, grim-jawed folk the reformers are apt to be : one-eyed, grim-jawed, seeing but the one thing, never letting go ; they have to be, to start a torpid nation. Such men as doers of the single thing drudge their way to their success. Even so must we, would we win ours. The foot-loose man is *not* the enviable man. If wise, a man will be his own necessity, and bind himself to a task, if early wealth or other lowering circumstances fail to bind him.

Dale Owen in his autobiography told the story of a foot-loose man, ruined by his happy circumstances. It was his father's friend, one born to princely fortune, educated with the best, married happily, with children growing up around him. All that health and wealth and taste and leisure could give were his. Robert Owen, an incessant worker, once went to spend a rare rest-moment with him at his country-seat, one of the great English parks. To the tired man, who had earned the peace, the quiet days seemed perfect, and at last he said to his host, "I have been thinking that if I ever met a man who had nothing to desire, you must be he ; are you not completely happy ?" The answer came : "Happy ! Ah, Mr. Owen, I committed one fatal error in my youth, and dearly have I paid for it ! I started in life without an object, almost without an ambition. I said to myself, 'I have all that I see others contending for ; why should I struggle ?' I knew not the curse that lights on those who have never to struggle for anything. I ought to have created for myself some definite pursuit, no matter what, so that there would be something to labor for and to overcome. Then I might have been happy." Said Owen to him, "Come and spend a month with me at Braxfield. You have a larger share in the mills than any of us partners. Come and see for yourself what has been done for the work-people there and for their children ; and give me your aid." "It is too late," was the reply. "The power is gone. Habits are become chains. You can work and do good ; but for *me*, in all the profitless years gone by I seek vainly for something to remember with pride, or even to dwell on with satisfaction. I have thrown away a life." And he had only one life in this world to lose.

Again then, I say, Let us sing a hallelujah and make a fresh beatitude to Drudgery : *Blessed be Drudgery !* It is the one thing that we cannot spare.

III.

This is a hard gospel, is it not ? But now there is a pleasanter word to briefly say. To lay the firm foundations in ourselves, or even to win success in life, we *must* be drudges,—that I take for granted now. But we *can* be *artists*, also, in our daily task. And at that word things brighten.

“ Artists,” I say, not artisans. “ The difference ? ” This : the artist is he who strives to perfect his work,—the artisan strives to get through it. The artist would fain finish, too ; but with him it is to “ finish the work God has given me to do ! ” It is not how great a thing we do, but how well we do the thing we have to, that puts us in the noble brotherhood of artists. My Real is not my Ideal,—is that my complaint ? One thing at least is in my power : if I cannot realize my Ideal, I can at least *idealize my Real*. How ? By trying to be perfect in it. If I am but a raindrop in a shower, I will be at least a perfect drop ; if but a leaf in a whole June, I will be at least a perfect leaf. This poor “ one thing I do,”—instead of repining at its lowness or its hardness, I will make it glorious by my supreme loyalty to its demand.

An artist himself shall speak. It was Michael Angelo who said, “ Nothing makes the soul so pure, so religious, as the endeavor to create something perfect : for God is perfection, and whoever strives for it strives for something that is God-like. True painting is only an image of God’s perfection,—a

shadow of the pencil with which he paints, a melody, a striving after harmony." The great masters in music, the great masters in all that we call artistry, would echo Michael Angelo in this ; he speaks the artist-essence out. But what holds good upon his grand scale, and with those whose names are known, holds equally good of all pursuits and all lives. That true painting is an image of God's perfection must be true, if he says so ; but no more true of painting than of shoemaking, of Michael Angelo than of John Pounds the cobbler. I asked a cobbler once how long it took to become a good shoemaker ; he answered promptly, "Six years, sir, and then you must travel." That cobbler had the artist-soul. I told a friend the story and he asked his cobbler the same question, How long does it take to become a good shoemaker ? "All your life, sir." That was still better a Michael Angelo of shoes ! Mr. Maydole, the hammer-maker of central New York, was an artist : "Yes," said he to Mr. Parton, "I have made hammers here for twenty-eight years." "Well, then, you ought to be able to make a pretty good hammer by this time." "No, sir," was the answer, "I *never* made a pretty good hammer. I make the best hammer made in the United States." Daniel Morell, once president of the Cambria rail-works, in Pittsburg, which employed seven thousand men, was an artist, and trained artists. "What is the secret of such a development of business as this ?" asked the visitor. "We have no secret," was the answer, "we always try to beat our last batch of rails. That's all the secret we have, and we don't care who knows it." The Paris book-binder was an artist, who, when the rare volume of Corneille,

discovered in a book-stall, was brought to him, and he was asked how long it would take him to bind it, answered, "Oh, sir, you must give me a year at least ; *this* needs all my care." Our Ben Franklin showed the artist, when he began his own epitaph, "Benjamin Franklin, printer." And Professor Agassiz, when he told the interviewer that he had "no time to make money," and began his will, "I, Louis Agassiz, teacher."

In one of Murillo's pictures in the Louvre, he shows us the interior of a convent kitchen ; but doing the work, there are—not mortals in old dresses—but beautiful white-winged angels. One serenely puts the kettle on the fire to boil, and one is lifting up a pail of water with heavenly grace, and one is at the kitchen dresser reaching up for plates ; and I believe there is a little cherub running about and getting in the way, trying to help. What the old monkish legend that it represented is, I do not know. But as the painter puts it to you on his canvas, all are so busy, and working with such a will, and so refining the work as they do it, that somehow you forget that pans are pans and pots pots, and only think of the angels, and how very natural and beautiful kitchen-work is,—just what the angels would do, of course.

It is the angel-aim and standard in an act that consecrates it. He who aims for perfections in a trifle is trying to do that trifle holily. The *trier* wears the halo ; and therefore the halo grows as quickly round the brows of peasant as of king. This aspiration for perfect doing,—is it not religion practicalized ? If we use the name of God at all, is this not God's presence becoming actor in us ? No need, then, of being

“great” to share that aspiration and that presence. The smallest roadside pool has its water from heaven and its gleam from the sun, and can hold the stars in its bosom, as well as the great ocean. Even so the humblest man or woman can live splendidly ! That is the royal truth that we need to believe, you and I who have no “mission,” and no great sphere to move in. The universe is not quite complete without *my* work well done. Have you ever read George Eliot’s poem called “Stradivarius” ? Stradivarius was the famous old violin maker, whose violins, nearly two centuries old, are almost worth their weight in gold to-day. Says Stradivarius in the poem : —

“ If my hand slackd,
I should rob God,— since he is fullest good,—
Leaving a blank instead of violins.
He could not make Antonio Stradivari’s violins
Without Antonio.”

That is just as true of us as of our greatest brothers. What, stand with slackened hands and fallen hearts before the littleness of your service ! Too little, is it, to be perfect in it ? Would you, then, if you were Master, risk a greater treasure in the hands of such a man ? Oh, there is no man, no woman, so small that they cannot make their life great by high endeavor ; no sick crippled child on its bed that cannot fill a niche of service *that* way, in the world. This is the whole of the Gospel to him who is ready for it, that the kingdom of heaven is near *him*, just where he is ; is just as near us as our work is ; for the gate of heaven for each soul lies in the endeavor to do that work perfectly.

But to bend this talk back to the word with which we started : will this striving for perfection in the

little thing give "culture"? Have you ever watched such striving in operation? Have you never met humble men and women who read little, who knew little, yet who had a certain fascination as of fineness lurking about them? Know them, and you will be apt to find them persons who have put so much thought and honesty and conscientious trying into their common work,—it may be sweeping rooms, or planing boards, or painting walls,—have put their ideals so long, so constantly, so lovingly, into that common work of theirs, that finally these qualities have come to permeate not their work only, but their being, till they are fine-fibred through and through; even if, on the outside, rough bark still may cling. Without being schooled, they instinctively detect a sham,—one test of culture. Without haunting the drawing-rooms, they have manners of quaint grace and graciousness,—another test of culture. Without the singing-lessons their tones are apt to be gentle,—another test of culture. Without knowing anything about Art, so called, they know and love the best in *one* thing, are artists in their own little specialty of work,—and that has tended to make them artists in their life. They make good company these men and women,—why? Because, not having been able to realize their Ideals, they have idealized their Real, and thus in the depths of their nature have won true "culture."

You know all Beatitudes are based on something hard to do or to be. "Blessed are the meek": is it easy to be meek? "Blessed are the pure in heart": is that so very easy? "Blessed are they who mourn." "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst,"—who *starve*— "after righteousness." So this new beati-

tude by its hardness only falls into line with all the rest. A third time and heartily I say it, — “Blessed be Drudgery !” For thrice it blesses us : it gives us the fundamental qualities of manhood and womanhood ; it gives us success in the thing we have to do ; and it makes us, if we choose, artists, — artists within, whatever our outward work may be. *Blessed be Drudgery*, — the secret of all Culture !

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A MAN'S RIGHT TO HAPPINESS

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

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A MAN'S RIGHT TO HAPPINESS.

"Behold, I come quickly: and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is." — REV. xxii: 12.

WHEN a young person contemplates undertaking some great responsibility, which shall open the door of an entirely new phase of life, almost the first question that comes to mind is the question, "Shall I be happy if I do this?" Never did a young maiden plight her troth to her lover without first anxiously asking herself, "Shall I be happy if I marry him?" Never did a young man determine upon the field of activity he should enter for his life-work, without asking himself first, "Shall I be happy if I decide to become an engineer or a lawyer? Here is one of the critical points in my life. I must now determine what I shall do; in what especial branch of industry I shall exercise my fresh energies. The first thing to decide is, which one will yield me the greatest and the most permanent share of personal happiness." And his decision will depend largely upon the verdict of his judgment upon this single question.

The question is common enough. We all recognize it at once, for it would be strange indeed if we had not each of us asked ourselves that question many times during life. But the question betrays the existence of two ideas in people's minds. It implies two popular notions regarding happiness, which are, perhaps, more erroneous than would seem possible. When the young person on the brink of a great, new enterprise, asks that hysterical question, "Shall I be

happy if I do so and so?" it betrays, in the first place, the notion in his mind that **his** happiness is something that is governed by outward circumstances. It implies the belief that if he puts himself into a certain set of conditions, those conditions will render up to him a certain amount of happiness, which shall be greater or less according to the nature of the conditions. And it betrays, in the second place, the idea that he has a right to happiness; that he has the right of claiming from the world a certain amount of happiness as his just and lawful due. Now, inasmuch as every sound-minded person is interested in this matter of happiness, it may not be amiss to examine these two popular notions, with a view to exposing their inadequacy, and, if possible, substituting for them a truer conception of the nature and causes of happiness.

When the silversmith fastens his iron spoon to the cathode pole of his plating battery, and plunges it into the bath, he finds when he takes it out that countless minute particles of pure silver have impinged themselves upon the iron spoon in that electric bath, so that it is now silver-plated. It only needs to be polished to make it shine with all the lustre of the pure metal. When the plumber takes a piece of iron pipe, and plunges it into his galvanic tank, he finds upon withdrawing it that it is coated with a thick coating of zinc — galvanized, he calls it. Here is precisely the notion that people commonly have about happiness or sorrow. Happiness is some rare property that will be impinged upon a life, from without, if that life is plunged into the proper bath — the proper set of circumstances. And sorrow, also, is some doleful disfigurement that will coat over a life, if in a

moment of misjudgment or carelessness, that life is plunged into the biting solution of a galvanic bath. Happiness and sorrow are qualities which are given to a life by the action of the conditions into which that life is thrown. It therefore behooves every man and every woman to exercise the greatest care in choosing the conditions of their living, for out of those conditions they are fated to be either adorned with the bright lustre of happiness, or galvanized by the harsh and scaly coating of misery. This is the popular notion concerning happiness. The trouble with it is that there is but a very small grain of truth in it. Happiness — whatever we mean by that word — is not the fruit of environment. It is not something that can be given to a man by the fortunate collusion of external conditions. To be sure, the conditions may help greatly in hastening or retarding his happiness, but in the last resort man's happiness is a matter of his own temperament. It makes but little difference where or how a man is placed, if he is born with a happy temperament, nothing can prevent his enjoying happiness. If he is born with a morose temperament, nothing can make him happy.

The person who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes declares that he had spent his days in an earnest search for happiness, and had failed. He had tried every method, he had resorted to every expedient, and the result was always the same — Vanity of Vanities. Neither wisdom, nor amusement, nor wealth, neither song, nor dance, nor all the blandishments of luxury, could furnish him the end he sought. It is simply as we should expect it to be with a man of his temperament. "I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and behold, all was vanity

and a striving after wind, and there was no profit under the sun." His case reminds us of a couplet from Pope's "Essay on Criticism": —

"All seems infected that the infected spy,
As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye."

To re-enforce our hypothesis, we may turn our attention to the ragged vagabond, in an allegorical poem by the Hon. John Hay. The poem is called "The Tale of the Shirt." It happened that the king of that country lay ill of a perplexing malady, from which he could recover, so the royal physician assured him, only when he had slept one night in the shirt of a happy man. Couriers had forthwith been despatched to scour the country-side, find that happy man, and strip him of his shirt, — but the task had proved too baffling. Everywhere they had been answered by the sigh of unfulfilled desire, until in sheer weariness of failure they were plodding reluctantly back to the palace. But even as they wend dejectedly along the highway, they come suddenly upon a ragged vagabond, lying in the sun by the roadside, and singing and shouting in a very exuberance of gayety. To their question the merry rogue replies that of course he is happy — the world is so beautiful, the sun is so warm, the air is so sweet, the meadows are so bright; how could he be any other than happy? But when, with thankful hearts, the couriers ask him for his shirt to take to the king, he answers, with another paroxysm of mirth, that he has not a shirt to his back. And so the baffled couriers return to their royal master with this significant piece of information. that the only happy man in his whole kingdom was so wretchedly poor that he had no shirt. And the

king, after thinking a while, rises from his bed, and goes quietly about his royal tasks, a graver and a more thoughtful monarch. It is, of course, possible to make the objection that the ragged vagabond was merely a figment of the author's imagination. True enough, and yet he has thousands of prototypes in living, breathing men and women. And they all stand as witnesses to this great fact of human nature — the very fact to which both the author of *Ecclesiastes* and the vagabond of Mr. Hay's poem testify — that a man's happiness depends not upon his outward circumstances, but upon his innate temperament. If it were not so, then the author of *Ecclesiastes*, with his palaces, his gardens, and his choirs of sweet singers, should have been a happy man, while the homeless vagabond, who lay by the roadside in his rags and patches, must needs have been desperately wretched.

When the astronomer attempts to correct his chronometer by reading the crossing of a star through his transit, he finds it necessary to introduce into his computations a factor which he calls the "personal equation." As any psychologist will tell us, it takes a fraction of a second for the observer's nerve, brain, and muscle to do their part in recording the crossing of that star, and this fraction of a second, which is called the "reaction time," and which differs with each different observer, must be neutralized by the personal equation in order that the calculation may be as nearly exact as is humanly possible. As in astronomy, so in almost every branch or phase of daily life, there exists the personal equation. Different people are differently influenced by the same thing. Different people act differently under the same conditions. Different people look upon the same life, the

same labor, the same opportunities, in different ways — in ways so different as to sound every note in the scale of human emotions, from happiness to misery. It is not the outward circumstances nor the surrounding conditions that control the degree of a man's joy. That degree of joy is determined rather by the inherent personal equation which he applies to the facts and observations of life. His happiness is a matter of his own inborn temperament.

There is a note of hopelessness in all this. Apparently some men are doomed, then, from their birth, and through no fault of theirs, to a sour and a melancholy existence. If happiness is a product which personal effort will not yield, but which is fore-ordained in ways which we cannot affect, then life takes on at once a fatalistic coloring, which declares our human endeavor to be futile. If we are born happy, well and good — so much the more fortunate are we. But if we are born morose, and no amount of temporal success will make us other than morose, we may as well sit back and pray for a speedy release. If happiness is a matter of inborn temperament, then our much vaunted privilege known as the pursuit of happiness is an empty boast. The leopard cannot change his spots. We cannot change our natural temperaments, and the winning of happiness is a matter taken out of our hands. At once life looks stereotyped and dead. Once take away the productiveness of personal effort, of personal endeavor, and we are left grounded upon the shoals of futility. Our energies lose their spring. Our spirits are robbed of their buoyancy. We are enmeshed in the tough web of a fatality whose operations we cannot influence.

People are too readily attacked by this insidious

logic of fatalism. It seems so very plausible to say that a man's temperament is decided independently of his own wish or desire, and that therefore he must be content to remain fettered and bound by that native temperament. It seems so very plausible to say that what is, is — that what will be, will be — and that all attempts to change one's destiny, or to modify one's disposition, are as vain as it would be to try and change one hair black or white. It all sounds very plausible indeed, but it is not true. The doctrine of fatalism is not only insidious and vicious, it is also untrue. We *can* modify our dispositions. We *can* change our temperaments. The whole long history of human growth stands as a glorious testimony to the success of human self-development. Of course, environment plays a great part in the process. The conditions of climate and geography, of fauna and flora, of topography and temperature, have huge weight in determining the trend of a society's growth, and in fixing its ultimate condition. But apart from all these outward circumstances, the most potent factor of all in procuring a state of social well-being is the power of conscious self-culture that lives and works within that society. And as it is true of a society, so is it true in equal measure of an individual — the strongest agent in procuring individual well-being is neither birth, nor breeding, nor inherited temperament, nor outward condition, but the ever-active power of self-culture which we may consciously employ within our own hearts.

Here is a wonderful fact to which we men and women are too easily indifferent. Self-cultivation is no myth, no high-sounding and empty phrase. It is a real possibility for every one. Surely there is no

need to prove to us, with our American traditions, with our countless examples of strong, noble, self-cultured men and women, with our Washington and our Lincoln, — there is no need to prove to us the possibility of self-cultivation. It is in the very air we breathe. Our national history is redolent with that sturdy spirit.

But here also is one of the stealthy dangers that wait in attendance upon a people whose civilization is becoming more complex and advanced, — that the power of self-culture is gradually forgotten, more and more lost to sight amidst the clamoring throng of external influences that crowd in upon us. Time was, in our healthy, robust, pioneer days, when the only means of achieving our well-being was through self-cultivation. There were none of the advantages offered for that purpose which present themselves to-day. Did a man want wisdom, or amusement, or manual skill, or mental strength? He could look nowhere for these things but to himself. Only by consistent and painstaking labor, only by conscious self-culture, could he obtain these blessings. But nowadays, with our numberless schools and playhouses, with our myriads of books and pamphlets and periodicals, we are not thrown upon ourselves. We need but to submit ourselves to one or the other of these external influences, in order to acquire the culture we demand. Self-culture is gradually being replaced, in our advancing civilization, by the culture that comes from without. Whereas the pioneer with his axe, standing solitary in the virgin forest, had to look to himself for all his help and growth, nowadays a young person crowded into our modern life, looks not to himself but to some external influence — school, or

church, or book, or playhouse — for the agent that shall develop his character and modify his temperament. In other words, it is not so much the power from within, it is rather the influence from without, that nowadays has greatest play upon human beings. The whole tendency of a highly developed civilization is to make people dependent upon external forces and influences. If we want to educate a boy, we send him to a college. We say, "Let us put him under that external influence, with the hope that that influence will so work upon him from without as to induce a corresponding condition within, so that he shall come forth educated." If we want to cure an unfortunate man of a vicious habit, we send him to an institution. We force him to face an outside influence. We put him through a process, with the hope that he will emerge at the other end, cured of his vice. As in large matters, so also in the closer details of our daily living, the tendency of the age is to make us dependent upon the external forces and currents of our complex life. It is not so much the power from within, as it is the power from without, that fashions us and moulds us.

All this is good. It is one of the blessings of advanced life. The more opportunities we have the better. But the unmixed blessing is a rare commodity, and even this great blessing of our highly advanced civilization brings in its train minor consequences of a disastrous nature. And one of those minor consequences is the waning of the power of self-culture, which is caused by this constant habit of looking to the power from without for our help. The danger is, that as the external influences increase about us, the power from within will be gradually el-

bowed out of existence, so that we are left, at the last, completely at the mercy of the external influences, with nothing to offset them when they are harmful; with nothing to replace them when they are insufficient.

It is one of the evils of our age, that we do not conduct ourselves wisely towards the richer opportunities which a wealthier civilization throws in our way. Half the young people who attend our colleges fail to reap the greatest benefit from the four years they spend among those tremendous opportunities. They attend their lectures generally with the idea that by simply submitting themselves, limp and unresisting, to the external influence which that lecture brings to bear on them, they will emerge, as the iron spoon emerges from the electric bath, silver-plated with the fine gloss of culture. Nothing could be wider of the mark. They forget that the lecture is only an opportunity, only a favorable external condition, in which the power within themselves can work more freely and more effectively. They forget that no matter how fine these opportunities may be, nothing can take the place of their own honest effort, in the task of winning culture.

This danger prevails, not only in our colleges, but in all walks of life. We are all too prone to forget that the outside influence is not sufficient, is not complete, but that it must be met half-way by the power from within. And when a man, in our wonderfully high civilization, moving about among the glorious opportunities and facilities of our age, knows enough to see that these external influences are not positive agents, but only tremendous opportunities for the freer life of the power within himself; and when he is

wise enough to accept these opportunities as they should be accepted, meeting them half-way with his own spontaneous efforts,—it seems as though there were nothing under the sun which such a man could not do; no height of nobility, of self-culture, to which he could not attain. It makes the blood tingle in our veins to think what sublime realms of development and of achievement he may reach. He has linked together the external influences that surround him, and the power that dwells within him. He has harnessed together his opportunity and his personal effort, and his progress is irresistible.

Four hundred years ago, the staunch little caravel, "Santa Maria," set out from Spain to discover a new world. She was a good ship of her kind. With silken banners and glistening sails, she issued forth upon the bosom of that mighty Sea of Darkness. But before long an angry billow broke her rudder, and a head wind drove her out of her course, and a cross-current drifted her back, and a black tempest whelmed her in desperate stress, and a quiet calm left her idle upon the waters. She was at the mercy of her external influences. She had no power from within, either to neutralize an obstacle, or to supply a deficiency. It was only by the mercy of Providence and the hardihood of her captain that she accomplished her errand. To-day our six-day liner starts from New York or Southampton, with her journey timed to the hour. Is the tide against her? What of that! Is the tempest black? Are the billows angry? Does the reeking fog hem her round? What are tempest, or tide, or fog, or calm, to her! With her compass and her chart, with her ten thousand horse-power dynamos purring their mighty note

in her bosom, she plunges on her way. Do the waves beat against her prow? She has the power from within to dash them aside. Do the winds favor her course, and fill her welcoming sails? She shall add their strength to the power from within, and make the better speed. And when her time is up, behold, the headlands of her port are sighted, and her journey is accomplished. Not by miracle, not by chance, but by the irresistible might of the power from within, linked with the external influences, she runs her stated course, and enters her haven promptly and safely at the last.

It is so with the man who uses his own energies in conjunction with the chances that surround him. We speak of the impossibility of self-culture. There is no limit to the glorious self-culture of such a man. We speak of the difficulty of self-development, of acquiring truer characters, and sweeter dispositions, and nobler temperaments. There is no bound set to the achievements in these lines, that are opened to such a man. He has yoked the power within him, to the influences that surround him, and he runs his course of life in safety and in certainty; and he reaches his haven of success without fail. Is he beset by sorrows and ruin? The power within him shall, by its sturdy might, drive him onward through the sorrow and the ruin. Do obstacles and head winds conspire to thwart his course and destroy his happiness? The power within him shall hold him steadfast to the work before him, and shall bring him a happiness which circumstances cannot tarnish. Is his temperament such that life looks sad and gray, and laughter is vain? The power that dwells within him shall mould his temperament, and shall train him in self-

control and self-devotion; and the sombre melancholy must give way to a deep optimism, and to the stern joy of hard-won victory. To such a man, happiness will be the fruit, not of circumstance, but of self-culture and self-control. He himself shall possess the resource that lifts him above the thralldom of his environment. His happiness shall be of the durable, firm-rooted sort that springs, not out of external conditions, but out of the richer soil of self-discipline.

Now to go back once more to the beginning; there is one other popular misconception which is betrayed by that eager question, "Shall I be happy if I do so and so?" That conception is, that each one has a right to be happy. When that question is asked at the threshold of some enterprise, it is equivalent to a claim that a certain modicum of happiness is naturally due to every one, and that every one may lawfully draw upon the world for their share of happiness. We have already answered this claim. It is not altogether justly founded. No one has a natural and inalienable right to happiness, any more than the laborer has a right to his wage until he has earned it. But every man has the right to earn it. And the way to earn it is the way that we have seen, — the way of real living; the way of earnest effort; the way of true growth and true self-cultivation. When that way of effort and growth has been faithfully journeyed, then man has a right to happiness. And *then*, in obedience to one of God's surest and holiest principles, his generous rewards of heavenly happiness shall be poured into man's heart without measure and without stint. "Behold, I come quickly," says a heavenly voice, "and my reward is with me, to render to each one according as his work is." He who labors faith-

fully and truly in this wonderful life of growth and opportunity shall have his happiness, because the Almighty God of Inexorable Law and Infallible Justice dwells in Heaven. And so long as he reigns supreme, his divine rewards shall be shed upon his faithful sons and daughters.

APR 12 1917

[No. 149]

THE TRUE SELF IS THE BEST SELF.

BY JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

ALL souls belong to God and to goodness by creation. God has evidently created every soul for goodness. He has carefully endowed it with indestructible faculties looking that way. Every soul has an indestructible idea of right and wrong, producing the feeling of obligation on the one hand, of penitence or remorse on the other. Every soul has the tendency to worship, to look up to some spiritual power higher than itself. Every soul is endowed with the gift of freedom, made capable of choosing between life and death, good and evil. Every soul is endowed with reason, with a capacity for knowledge; and especially is every soul endowed with the faculty of improvement, of progress.

THE true self in man is not bad, but good. Man goes away from himself whenever he does wrong. Hidden in the words we use are whole volumes of history and philosophy. When our words and phrases do not come from theories, but from the long observation of the race, they often contain the results of that experience in compact form. Thus "to come to one's self" means to recover mental and moral sanity.

Let us understand, then, that our true self, our real

self, is our best self. In our best hours we are most truly ourselves. We are then what God made and meant us to be. We are at one with ourselves. All our faculties work harmoniously, according to the true method. The soul commands: the body obeys. The conscience obeys the law of right: the appetites and desires are obedient to that conscience. There is no such thing, therefore, as natural depravity. All depravity is unnatural.

IF we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. If we say we are totally depraved, we also deceive ourselves. God has put into us a great deal that is good. He has given us reason, conscience, heart, freedom, to choose good, power to resist evil. When he has done all this for us, to say that he has made us totally depraved is not humility, but ingratitude and impiety.

THE sense of right and wrong, the delicacy of conscience, the feeling of moral obligation which is in us, we did not make ourselves. God gives it to us: he gives it anew all the time. It is his Holy Spirit dwelling in us, warning, advising, restraining, impelling us. It is in every human soul. This holy monitor, this sacred, solemn voice, is from grace, from love. It is the Father's arm held round every child to keep him safe from evil.

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[No. 150]

APR 12 1917

UNITARIAN PRINCIPLES

BY

REV. H. M. SIMMONS.

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

UNITARIAN PRINCIPLES.

The name "Unitarian" is supposed to have arisen to designate the believers in the divine unity rather than the trinity. That meaning still remains, but has also unfolded into a far larger one. The doctrine of the divine unity now looks immeasurably beyond the trinity to the infinity of the divine manifestations, and means the oneness, through all places and times and diversities, of that power called God.

This unity is proclaimed not only by theology, but through all modern thought. History, science, evolution,—all read it in the universal kinship of life and regularity of law. Each of the sciences reports, as the deepest truth it has found, Unity; all combine to chant as the largest truth Unity. And religion hears this as another Psalm, proclaiming more sublimely the Unity of that God of whom the Hebrew seer sang in Palestine and uttermost parts of the sea, in morning light and midnight darkness, in heaven and hell, and whom the apostle saw "above all and through all and in all." So abiding and infinite meaning is in that divine unity from which Unitarians are so fortunate as to be named.

But this truth involves the practical lesson of religious unity. For, if God is thus one and everywhere, then his presence has hallowed not only Judea, but all lands; not only the Hebrew, but all nations; not only the Christian, but all religions. Hence, instead of a single holy city and temple, Unitarianism sees every city holy where just men dwell, every spot a temple where they meet for wor-

ship or work, all honest life a liturgy, all love a sacrament. Instead of a few inspired writers, it sees all good literature and speech inspired, and the divine revelation ever continued through human reason and conscience. Instead of one sacred Scripture, it sees an infinite and endless Bible, reaching from its Old Testament in nature to its New Testament in man, from its "Genesis" in matter to its "Revelation" in mind,—a Bible wherein all truth is "the law," all human hopes are "the prophets," all good aspirations are "the Psalms," and all love a "gospel" telling of eternal life.

Hence Unitarianism has been tolerant. It has taught that the great essential in religion is uprightness of life and integrity of character, and that men should not be judged by their theological beliefs or ritual observances, but allowed full liberty to keep or change these as their own thought and conscience may direct. It has never imposed anything like a creed; and one of its great teachers said, "Unitarianism is not so much a body of opinions as the principle of liberty of opinion." It cares little for itself as a denomination; and one of its great preachers, Dr. Putnam, said, "I have hardly ever spoken so much as the word 'Unitarian,' or sought to enlist anything like sectarian sympathies," for "there is but one religion, that is goodness," and it should work for the "universal unity and brotherhood." So Dr. Martineau said that in religion all fences should be down. But of course this work for "universal unity" requires united effort and denominational organization.

Unitarians have not lost Christ by denying the trinity. They certainly have not lost him as a moral teacher. Has, indeed, the Trinitarian faith kept him as such? Peoples who have held that faith for centuries still treat his beatitudes of meekness and forgiveness as mere follies. Nations, believing it was a very God who ordered them to love their enemies, and offer the cheek when smitten, still fight like fiends, and

respond to his "Blessed are the peace-makers" with bombs and battleships.

Nor have Unitarians lost Christ as a divine incarnation. They still see him as a "son of God," and only add his own saying that every peace-maker is another, and the apostle's that "every one that loveth is begotten of God." They still believe that God dwelt in Jesus, and only add the apostle's words that, "if we love one another, God dwelleth in us," too, and that whosoever "dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Unitarians are often charged with denying the divinity of Christ. They do not deny, but declare it. They declare the divinity of his lessons of love, the divinity of the soul that felt them, the divinity of the man who lived them. But by the same principle they declare the divinity of that love everywhere, the divinity of all souls that feel it and of all the men who live it. This is their theology,—that God is love, and lived in the loving Jesus, and lives in all love, and is worshipped best by our love of each other.

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[No. 154]

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APR 12 1917

UNITARIANISM AND MODERN DISCOVERY

BY

REV. JOHN W CHADWICK

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

APR 12 1917

UNITARIANISM AS AFFECTED BY MODERN SCIENCE AND DISCOVERY.

BY REV. JOHN W. CHADWICK.

I have often said that there is no such Unitarian as Modern Science; and the statement is no rhetorical exaggeration, but is clearly within the lines of sober truth. For there is no word which resumes so much of modern science and discovery as Unity. All the great chapters of modern science are chapters of a possible book of which the title should be "The Unities of the Natural World." Profound thinkers have doubted whether the Conservation of Energy is not a greater discovery than Darwin's Origin of Species by Natural Selection. And what a Unitarian discovery it is!—resolving, as it does, all forces into so many modes of motion, showing how each is capable of transformation into this or that other, and suggesting that all natural forces are but different manifestations of one great central force which keeps the universe in time and tune. What a Unitarian discovery is that of the Solar Spectrum, with its revelations of the identity of the substance of our planet with that of the sun and the more distant stars! How Unitarian those discoveries of the geologist which ally the processes now going on to those which have made the general configuration of the earth's surface what it is, the roadside stream and pool showing us how the great alluvial deposits have been made and the earth's surface variously embossed and graven! How Unitarian was Agassiz when he found everywhere in the progressive steps of nature ideal anticipations of the next succeeding! But how much more Unitarian was Darwin when he contended that these ideal anticipations were actual and genetic, and found one process sweeping through all genera and species, and all of these but differentiations of a common stock! Now all these unities

of static nature carry with them irresistibly the unity of that dynamic nature which is but another name for God.

Next to the unity of God, the dignity of human nature is the most characteristic doctrine of our Unitarian body of belief. Indeed, Channing called this his "one sublime idea"; and it was certainly much more to him than the numerical unity of God. It was the unity of God with Himself, his moral unity, the at-one-ment of his justice and his mercy, that was the unity for which Channing greatly cared. And this moral unity of God was an inference from the dignity of human nature. Could mortal man be more just than God, more kind, more merciful? Now it would seem as if the dignity of human nature was a doctrine that would suffer more than any other that we cherish from the later developments of science, especially from the doctrine of man's derivation from the lower animals. Good orthodox people who had never had a very lively sense of the dignity of human nature were greatly troubled by this impugment of it, and so at first were certain Unitarians. And no wonder, when there was Agassiz insisting passionately, "We are not the children of monkeys: we are the children of God." But before long a better sense prevailed. The long way humanity had come hinted the longer way it has to go toward its perfection. The divine patience in creating man, not by a sudden word, but by a process thousands of centuries long, was seen to be significant of his worth.

"'Tis not what man does that exalts him, but what man would do."

Still less is it what man has been that degrades him: it is his failure to be what now he might be if he would.

But with the conviction of man's animal origin there has come into our Unitarian thought a conviction of his animal inheritance. The individual mind is less a *tabula rasa* for us than it was for our fathers. It is a palimpsest to which many generations have contributed the various lines. Where the Calvinists found original sin and total depravity, we find ancestral taint and the pressure of a base environment; and so, more frequently, our blame for human weakness turns to pity on our lips and in our hearts.

The science of criticism, with its discovery of the true character of the Bible, has brought immense and powerful

confirmation to our later modes of Unitarian thought. Our Unitarian scholars are to-day in substantial agreement with the scholars of all other religious bodies, the Roman Catholic included, as to the character of the Biblical writings, their date and authorship, and the mechanical juxtaposition of their parts. The inferences drawn from these critical results, however, vary considerably. The more orthodox still endeavor to make out that there is in the Bible "a kind of a sort of a something" that entitles it to be called a supernatural book; but even here the word "supernatural" is eviscerated wholly of its traditional contents. It is evident that a book of this character can furnish no arbitrary authority for any system of belief. The foundation of Scripture once claimed for dogmatic Christianity perishes utterly. If the traditional system of doctrine is to survive, it must survive because of its intrinsic rationality. Nothing can be more absurd than the insistence that the critical transformation of the Bible does not affect its theological contents. It may be better than ever, but it cannot be the same. A great philologist, George P. Marsh, declared that to retranslate the Bible would be fatal to the traditional theology. But its critical disintegration and rearrangement is to a new translation, though it were such as Bottom's in Shakspeare's fantasy, as ten, or ten times ten, to one, as affecting its theological contents and implications. Meantime, the Roman Catholics are happy. "Let the gall'd jade wince," they say: "our withers are unwrung." Their dependence is not on Scripture, but on tradition. But the tradition is as subject to criticism as the Scripture, and the outcome of the criticism does not leave one stone of the Roman Catholic's traditional pretensions on another.

The Bible of scientific criticism is not the Bible of our Unitarian fathers. That was as supernatural as the Bible of their orthodox contemporaries, until in their passionate eagerness to discover *what it taught* they got first an inkling and then a clear understanding of *what it was*. Simultaneously, our conception of Jesus has become more and more humanitarian. Not only have many of the orthodox proof-texts disappeared: those that remain are seen to prove what certain known or unknown persons thought about the nature of Jesus, proving nothing as to what that nature actually was.

Another science, that of Comparative Religion, has done much to abash the pretensions of Christianity to a unique character and to widen our religious sympathies with sheep of other folds.

In general, the development of natural science has so tended to enlarge the universe for a devout imagination that such a scheme of religion as that heretofore exploited by our orthodox friends is frankly impossible. It is utterly incongruous with the vastness and the splendor of the universe as science has revealed it to the scientific mind. As a house of cards compared with Salisbury or Amiens is the traditional theology compared with the universe of science. And Unitarianism, too, has been compelled to find a "larger thought of God," commensurate with its thought of the eternities and immensities as they have been brought home to its imagination by the disclosures of the astronomer and geologist, the biologist and anthropologist.

However it was with us in the earlier course of our development, we have had of late a very real advantage over the most of those who keep up a semi-detached connection with the conservative churches, in that our intellectual integrity and self-respect are not subjected to the constant strain of the endeavor to somehow square our actual belief with the standards of Orthodoxy expressed in this, that, or the other creed or catechism or confession. But closely allied with this advantage there is another which is much greater. It is that we can freely realize our Unitarian doctrines and ideas, that we cannot realize them too efficiently for our satisfaction and delight. We have not the least temptation to minimize these doctrines and ideas. We believe, and therefore speak, without equivocation; and to have a body of belief that we can so realize and so maximize is an advantage which we would not overvalue if we could, and could not if we would.

It goes without saying that much of the new truth of science is now widely accepted in the most orthodox circles. But it is generally accepted there as something that *must* be accepted, not as something that should be accepted joyfully. It is accepted apologetically. It is a simple fact that, in general, the whole body of recent science has had for us a genial and inviting aspect, while it has had for our orthodox friends a forbidding and repellent one. But it is undeniable

that the most recent science has opened many new problems, and that some of them may well breed in us an anxious heart. Our world is not such a nice, little, comfortable world as that of our Unitarian fathers. It is much more grand than that, much more mysterious, much more awful in its heights and depths, its glories and its glooms. But the more we search, the more we wonder, and the more we trust that, if we could see deep enough, we should "see musically," as Carlyle believed, and hear an all-including harmony of law and love.

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Unitarianism as a Religion for Every Day

BY

REV. JOHN W. DAY

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

RELIGION FOR EVERY DAY.

BY REV. JOHN W. DAY.

The test to which all forms of religion must come at last is the test of daily use. If it is true to the mind which looks at things more than names, if it has direct and veritable application to the problems of real life; and, if it passes beyond the correlated scheme of thought into the complex facts of existence, bringing there some efficient principle of order, religion will be satisfying. But if religion is a sublimated department of life, if it is the translation of powerful motives into ineffectual archaisms, if it is the turning away from life toward thoughts and statements and aims which can be connected with experience only by effort and continual readjustment, then religion, to the Unitarian, will not be satisfying. It is his aim to express religion in its simplest terms in order that its potency may come most directly into human life.

In this attachment to essentials, and to those forms and statements only in which the essentials are operative, we care very much that all essentials shall be regarded. Religion in its simplest terms does not mean religion at its lowest terms. We believe in religion for every day; but the every-day religion, which is only a title for the average and mediocre, the contented and worldly aim, is as insufficient to us as to others. The lay Pharisee is as abhorrent as the ecclesiastical Pharisee, the empirical hypocrite not more admirable than the religious hypocrite. We do not, therefore, wholly reject those creeds to which we cannot subscribe. While we do not adopt them, we try, none the less, to appreciate them. A religion for every day cannot disregard the religion of other days. What in past times put iron in the blood and made morality strenuous, what made men indifferent to pain and serene in persecution, what made faith in God a faithfulness among men, and turned faulty theologies where they

contributed to faultless lives,—these elements must not be lost in the changes of faith. We look with sympathy and understanding upon other doctrines to save from them that which will give depth and force to our own. We are not unmindful of the course of history and the development of religious philosophy. We try to discover and profit by their tendencies, because they help the working force of religion in modern experience.

Unitarianism may be specifically distinguished in the way it uses the truths called orthodox as well as in its differences from those views. The central ideas which have characterized historic Christianity we give the acceptance experience permits. Their speculative place and value are recognized in being subordinated to their value in actual living. Belief, and the application of belief, is a process whose main importance is in the application. A belief that is not useful is hardly worth disputing, and that is the central continuity of Christian doctrine which may be traced in the divine succession of good lives. There is scarcely any creed, with truth enough to keep it, which may not be found partly incorporated in the lives of people who are reproached with destroying creeds. Follow the cardinal points, and it will be found that we apply the principles which have been mainly identified with doctrines. We have kept what we could use, and have thereby retained a connection with the main lines of Christian faith from which no denials can ever separate us. The patents on truth have all run out, and every man can use the faith that makes faithful without conditions.

From this point of view the most conservative belief is that which transmits the most power for daily life, that in which the friction is least, the machinery simplest, and the product most abundant. Because the Unitarian receives the primary truths of religion in original packages is a strange reason for thinking he does not use them. He unpacks the theological boxes, unties the creed parcels, and distributes their contents with regard to their utility. His needs for this life must first be attended to; and, while we can claim no exclusive use of this method, we are content to rest under the honorable reproach of applying it with reference to every belief that comes under our notice. In the Unitarian method there is a natural process of sifting practice from theory.

truth from doctrine, life from history, and the lessons of experience from the recommendations of sects. The Unitarian likes the kind of faith he can put his hand on when he needs it. He chooses what makes for edification, he stands by what stands by him, he takes religion for every-day use. He finds it in his business, reminding him how the laws of integrity underlie all lasting prosperity. It walks with him on the street, strengthening him against the evil he sees, and opening his eyes to the good in men which it is easy not to see. It is under his sorrow, bracing up his fortitude and consoling his grief and developing the sense of things eternal which do not pass away. It is with him through temptation, in his admiration of good men whose example is his rebuke and encouragement, and in his veneration of noble lives far above his own, yet not too far to attract it, and in his grateful reverence toward that man of men whose purity withstood the world, and whose gentleness and courage, love, truth, and sacrifice, having been an acknowledged pattern to the saints, are above them all in mastery of human life.

Christianity is to the Unitarian more incarnate than it seems to him to be through any other teaching, because he alone does not scruple to accept the full implications of an incarnation. The Unitarian does not stop with an imperfectly human Christ who can go with him only part way, and who only in a limited sense can be said to be a man. The Unitarian objects to no exaltation of the man Jesus to the level of divinity so long as there is no derogation of his manhood in the process. Jesus is to him the first born among many brethren, among whom he is one. Not as a figure of speech, but in all that the name can imply in such connection, Jesus is our brother; and this, the distinctive note of Unitarianism, is a belief which brings religion in human shape and substance where it will have the whole effect of example and inspiration. To know that Jesus was a man like us is to put his influence where it will do most to make us men like him. No separation can excuse our poor performance. His perfection is not in another range of life, — a continual vision and yet our continual despair. It is the height toward which every upward pathway lifts us, and it is in organic relation with every soul born into the world. Thus, however far above us, the elevation is never isolation.

The influence of Jesus is always within the sphere of human imitableness, and in every part of our nature reaches us by a real and vital bond. He is at once far and near, and to no one more than to the Unitarian can Jesus become the companion and master of men. He makes religion a human thing, a higher power in every-day living.

The effect of this method of using the intellectual, moral, and personal forces of religion, is to reduce the word expression of faith and to increase its life expression. It is easy to accept the doctrine which it may be difficult to live. Life is the test of faith. The result, therefore, is not immediately obtainable nor the judgment at once to be pronounced. An argument, a conformity, a sacramental fidelity, is quickly concluded and the outcome estimated. Not so a character, a morality, a religion. As regards the length of his creed, the Unitarian seems to choose the easy course, but not as regards its requirements. His belief is not an easy one to live up to. The religion most helpful in daily life must, for that reason, be the hardest one to practise, since it allows no substitution for fidelity, enters into every way, and admits no excuses, however sanctified. No other righteousness, no self-righteousness, will suffice any man. Virtue is held inviolable, and only by merit are its honors gained. To this hard service the Unitarian hears religion call the faithful man. But he believes the hardness is inspiring, the service honorable, and the reward such as with a good conscience he can accept. He takes the point of view of the woman who said that she liked the Unitarian religion because it swept under the mats.

This uncompromising morality, which is the accepted Unitarian emphasis on religion, is often referred to as though it were insufficient. But it is not "mere morality" which is meant: it is full morality, and this ideal we are not ashamed to be known by, though we claim nothing in accepting it. We are much more likely to be condemned by it than for it. Wherever it appears and under whatever name, we declare for the religion of honest vision, clear-minded faith, and divine assistance, which is measured more by behavior than by professions, more by conduct than by creed, more by ordinary habit than by exceptional fervor, and which is so formed as to enter readily into the every-day life of the world.

with grace and power. In so far as it meets men at those points where they most need religion, such a religion is the glory of this life ; and, because it is the best religion to live by in this world, we believe it will best fit men to live in the next world.

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THE

UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

BY CHARLES A. ALLEN.

"From scheme and creed the light goes out,
The saintly fact survives;
The blessed Master none can doubt,
Revealed in holy lives."



BOSTON:
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

OUR FAITH

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ,
we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

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THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

"One hope, one faith, one love, restore
The seamless robe that Jesus wore."

It is nearly eight hundred years since the nations of Christian Europe in a sudden outburst of religious enthusiasm became for the first time conscious of their brotherhood. For centuries these tribes had been like a pack of hungry wolves, falling upon one another to kill and devour. The robber barons were incessantly at war; each little castle on its lonely hill-top was a den of thieves. Deadly hatreds were handed down from father to son; the nearest neighbors watched year by year for opportunities of mutual slaughter. Even the Church, with its awful authority, overshadowing this world with the presence of a Supernatural World and the terrors of everlasting doom, was almost powerless to pacify the long and frightful anarchy. The unity of the Church, which was taught in mystic sacrament and creed and symbol, proclaiming that all Christians were brothers because they had One God and One Saviour, seemed a hopeless dream.

Suddenly the picture changed. The voice of Peter the Hermit rang through Europe, calling upon the faithful sons of the Church to arm themselves for the rescue of the sepulchre of Christ. He breathed the fire of his own zeal into the hearts of multitudes. Nobles sold their lands, and kings mortgaged their crowns, that they might spend their last treasures in the holy cause of the Cross. Old hatreds melted away in the furnace heat of this new enthusiasm. Deadly foes became devoted brothers. Hostile nations that had never met before but for strife, and could not even understand one another's language, now marched under the same banner and felt the inspiration of the same purpose. By hundreds of thousands they poured over Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean waters, upon the plains of Syria. The

Turkish armies were driven back ; the Holy Sepulchre was rescued ; and Christendom felt that surely the Millennium was at hand, that Christ would soon descend from the skies to rule over His own. But at last the tide turned. The Turks swept over Syria, and crossed into Europe ; they encamped around the city of Constantine, and at one time threatened the subjugation of Christendom. Only the valor of the Polish and Hungarian people saved Western Europe.

Thus the great Crusades were a failure in what they directly aimed at. But *indirectly* they brought to Europe this great blessing, of making these discordant nations for the first time know that they were brothers. And this was realized, *not by their reciting the same creed*, which indeed they had often done for centuries, *but by their sharing a religious enthusiasm* for the same great object.

The lesson, however, was but half learned. Fresh quarrels arose. The Turks were still threatening Western Europe, when the Roman Church divided on questions of creed. A hundred sects hurled at one another their anathemas. Bloody strifes and frightful persecutions followed. The test that the Master gave, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," sounded now like an awful condemnation. Instead of the "unity of the Spirit" into which Christendom had suddenly awakened in the grand enthusiasm of the Crusades, there were now the fearful agonies of the so-called religious wars.

But a better age was already dawning. Among the Hungarian people who were saving Christendom from the Turks there was taught the doctrine that, not creed belief, but the love to God and man on which, the Master said, "hang all the law and the prophets," is the true ground of Christian fellowship, and that, *not the head, but the heart*, brings Christians together. Hence these believers in the "unity of the Spirit" (Eph. i. 4) called themselves "Unitarians," and were the first to bear the name, in the great epoch of the Reformation.¹

¹ The name "Unitarians" originally meant *union-men*, or those who believe in the largest Christian co-operation, and would fellowship all who

And this, rather than any doctrine about God or Christ, is what Unitarianism has really stood for. This is the doctrine which Channing preached in this country, and for which our churches have borne their witness since. This is why we take the name of "Liberal Christians." And as fast as the other Christian Churches have been brought closer together by the great enthusiasms of philanthropy that have made illustrious the present century, they also have learned in some degree the meaning of "the unity of the Spirit," and by these lessons of Christian brotherhood are more clearly understanding the meaning of Christianity itself.

For it is only in the enthusiasms of *humanity* that men learn the noblest *religious* spirit. A sense of human brotherhood must always precede a belief in a Divine fatherhood. "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen," says the Apostle, "how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" — and, we might add, how can he believe in the love of God for him and for all his fellow men? See how, in times of wide-spread distress, when whole nations are moved with pity, all the divisions that a narrow religion has made melt away, and men worship

"profess and call themselves Christians," without regard to differences of creed and rite, if only the spirit and life be Christian. It was a protest against all sectarianism, the evil spirit of creed conceit and arrogance, which has been the chief sin and curse of the Christian Church since the Apostolic Age. It was a prophecy of the generous spirit that is now bringing all branches of the Church nearer together in the unity of the Spirit.

The proof of this is to be found in Rees's "Translation of the Racovian Catechism" (London, 1818), of which there is a copy in the Cambridge Divinity School Library. On pp. xliii and xliv, Rees, in a foot-note, quotes Peter Bod's history of the dispute before the Synod at Weissemburg in Hungary, 1568, as relating (p. 45) that at the Diet of Thorde in 1557 an edict was passed securing to persons of all denominations the free exercise of their religion, and on account of this *union* all the Reformed Churches were called *Uniti* or *Unitarii*. But, when a few years later the more conservative party in these Churches fell away from this union and formed sects, the more liberal party, who still believed in a generous fellowship, retained the name of *Unitarii*.

It is a curious fact that the word Unitarian does not occur in Johnson's Dictionary, of which the last edition in the author's lifetime is dated 1773.

It would be well if the Unitarians of to-day would all insist upon restoring the primitive meaning of their denominational name.

together who before had seemed to believe in different Gods ; they now only know that it is *fellow men* who are suffering, not Catholic or Protestant, Hebrew or Christian ; and they learn to say, with the ancient prophet, “ Have we not all one Father ? Hath not one God created us ? ”

It is in these great enthusiasms of philanthropy and religion that this unity of the Spirit is clearly manifested, — not at all in the acceptance of creeds. It is inevitable that honest men should *think differently* ; and, when they undertake to *reason* together, a confusion falls on them like that of Babel. They speak different tongues, and every one thinks his neighbor’s language nonsense. The great calamities that have fallen upon the Church have all been caused by the mistake of trying to enforce a uniformity of creed, instead of being content with that unity of the Spirit that bound together the first disciples in their reverent *loyalty* to the common Master, their filial *trust* in the Heavenly Father, and their fraternal *love* toward fellow men, which is the true Christian trinity, — but it is one which the heart alone, and not the head, can apprehend, — and in these three divine enthusiasms there is always unity.

It is this practical loyalty *to* Christ, not any creed belief *about* him, that the New Testament means by “ faith ” and “ believing in Christ ” ; for the Master himself blessed those who, by clothing the naked and feeding the hungry, had proved themselves loyal to his spirit and work, though they had never even so much as heard of him, much less could have had any definite belief about him. Yet they must have had true “ faith ” ; they must have really “ believed in Christ ” ; — otherwise he would never have blessed them as he did, when at the very same time he dismissed as “ cursed ” those who, though they had been accustomed to “ profess ” their faith in Christ (Matt. vii. 22, 23), had been lacking in this Christlike spirit of humanity (Matt. xxv. 34-46). It is the Christlike spirit and life, not any profession or creed belief, that Jesus will accept as true “ belief ” in him. It is not doctrinal truth, but practical truth, that he asks.

We may, therefore, be sure that in these great sentiments,

rather than in any theological dogmas, we can find the *higher life*, which *religion* is. What separates must be human ; what unites must be divine, *the life of the Spirit*. When we are quarrelling about theology, and even when we are merely interested in theological inquiry, we are not "in the Spirit."

Theology is not religion, but is something lower. Theology inevitably speaks many tongues, while religion has but one language, the common language of love, and loyalty, and trust, which is the voice of the Spirit.

How strange that the Christian Church has so seldom taken to heart the divine lesson of the Day of Pentecost ! Many and mutually unintelligible were the tongues that the disciples spoke to the multitude, but it was One Spirit that spoke through them all. And "every man heard them speak in his own language," — this Parthian heard the Gospel preached to *him* by some one of the disciples in the Parthian tongue, and that Phrygian in the Phrygian tongue. Thus Christian truth was taught to every man in the homely speech with which he was most familiar, and which would make that truth to him most vivid and clear.

And so we may rightly regard the various theologies and creeds of Christendom as so many *Pentecostal tongues* by which the Spirit has met the needs of different minds. While we listen to the mere tongues, we hear only hopeless discord ; but when we open our hearts to the tide of the Spirit, and deeply feel the warm glow of religious life that pours through these various channels, we comprehend that their real *meaning* is the same, and thus we share in the *unity* of the Spirit.

But at the heart of every great enthusiasm that draws men warmly together, there must be some *idea* which finds expression in different creeds and gives to them their spiritual life. The *minds* of men may not be able to see it alike, or their tongues to describe it alike ; but their *hearts* will feel its power alike, and be drawn by it into the unity of the Spirit. No better illustration of this truth can be found than in the "idea" that underlies the Catholic worship of Mary, the Protestant worship of Jesus, and the primitive Christian worship of the Heavenly Father alone.

For, if we compare Christianity with all the other great historic religions, we find that it taught the world a unique thought about God, and in consequence awakened in the hearts of men a new and higher religious life. Buddhism, the great religion of Eastern Asia, (which was at one time accepted by a third of mankind,) while it taught a noble morality and philanthropy, yet believed in no God but an unconscious Fate. Brahmanism worshipped a deity without character or love, the vague "Being" of Pantheism. Mohammedanism adored a righteous God, but only with fear and submission. Even Judaism was, as the Apostle said, "a spirit of bondage" to fear. But Christianity proclaimed that "God is Love," and taught men that they could *all* trust a Heavenly Father who was full of human sympathy and mercy. This is the essence of the Gospel, the glad tidings that Jesus brought. This it was that opened all the fountains of a deep and tender religious life, of faith, and hope, and love, and joy, as no other religion has been able to do. And in this belief about God, *though expressed in different theological languages*, all Christians find themselves brought together with the same religious emotions in the unity of the Spirit.

But it has necessarily found expression in various tongues adapted to various needs. Early in Christian history the name of Jesus himself was taken as the most vivid and touching *symbol* of the Divine Love which had shone so sweetly and persuasively through His life ; and *His* name was worshipped as the tenderest and *most human* name for God, which made most real and vivid to human hearts the *Christlikeness* of the Awful Mystery in which we live and have our being. *That* name had marvellous power to kindle faith and love, when other names would fail. And to many Christians to-day it is the only name for the Infinite One that adequately utters the Christian belief.

But in other ages, when Christ was thought of only as the terrible Judge, it was only by the worship of a divine *womanhood* in the Virgin Mary that the Christian Gospel could be still transmitted, and the Christian life of trust and love be saved from utter extinction. And by multitudes of true Christians to-day the divineness of Mary is held as an essential doctrine of Christianity, because they cannot see how the vital truth of

Christianity can be expressed and apprehended in any other way.

Thus in different minds the spiritual truth of Christianity must necessarily be apprehended in different ways, and be stated in different doctrinal forms, as water poured into different vessels takes the different shapes of the vessels that receive it, — a lesson that one of our own poets has beautifully taught in a legend about Ambrose, who was Bishop of Milan, 400 A. D., and a famous theologian : —

Never surely was holier man
Than Ambrose, since the world began.
Through earnest prayer and watchings long
He sought to know 'twixt right and wrong ;
Much wrestling with the Blessed Word
To make it yield the sense of the Lord,
That he might build a storm-proof creed
To fold the flock in at their need.
At last he builded a perfect faith,
All fenced about with "The Lord thus saith."
To *himself* he fitted the doorway's size,
Meted the light to the need of his eyes,
And knew, by a sure and inward sign,
That the work of his fingers was divine.
Then Ambrose said, "All those shall die
The eternal death who believe not as I."
And some were boiled, some burned in fire,
Some sawn in twain, that his heart's desire,
For the good of men's souls, might be satisfied,
By the drawing of all to the righteous side.

One day, as Ambrose was seeking the truth
In his lonely walk, he saw a youth
Resting himself in the shade of a tree.
It had never been given him to see
So shining a face, and the good man thought
'T were pity he should not believe as he ought ;
So he set himself by the young man's side,
And the "state of his soul" with questions tried.

But the heart of the stranger was hardened indeed,
Nor received the stamp of the one true creed ;
And the spirit of Ambrose waxed sore to find
Such face the porch of so narrow a mind.

Now there bubbled beside them where they stood
A fountain of waters, sweet and good.
The youth to the streamlet's brink drew near,
Saying, " Ambrose, thou maker of creeds, look here ! "
Six vases of crystal then he took,
And set them along the edge of the brook.
" As into these vessels the water I pour,
There shall one hold less, the other more,
And the water unchanged, in every case,
Shall put on the figure of the vase.
O thou, who wouldst unity make through strife,
Canst thou fit this sign to the Water of Life ? "

When Ambrose looked up he stood alone ;
The youth and the stream and the vases were gone ;
But he knew, by a sense of humbled grace,
He had talked with an angel face to face,
And he felt his heart change inwardly,
As he fell on his knees beside the tree.

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5. The *unity of God's character*, regarding His love as in perfect harmony with His justice, both working together for the highest welfare of all souls.

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[No. 160]

Is the Bible Infallible?

*Does the Bible claim Infallibility? Where does
the Doctrine come from? "The Whole
Bible or None!" The Bible's
Real Value.*

BY

REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND

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IS THE BIBLE INFALLIBLE?

The popular mind is full of the idea that, as regards the Bible, the alternative is, "all or none": we must either accept the volume entire, as in every part "a perfect and infallible revelation from God," or else "throw it all away."

That such an alternative seems to any to be strange or unreasonable, does not alter the fact that it is in the public mind. The great majority of the people hold it as firmly as any other article of their religious creed.

No class of persons is more severely lashed from many pulpits, and by a large part of the religious press, than those advanced biblical scholars and critics who, as the charge is, "cut the Bible to pieces."

Says Dr. Talmage: "The Bible is either all true or all false." Mr. Spurgeon declared the same. Mr. Moody went so far as to affirm that "unless every word and every syllable, from Genesis to Revelation, is true, we have no Bible, and we may as well gather together what we have been calling our Bibles and make a bonfire of them, and build a monument heaven-high to Voltaire and Paine." Prominent denominations continue to depose able, scholarly, devout, and honored men from their ministry for denying the doctrine of

Bible infallibility ; and nearly all orthodox denominations maintain the doctrine as a prominent part of their creeds.

Thus we see that the question before us is not a light or a far-off matter. It is intensely living ; it is everywhere pressing upon public attention. It is one of the subjects that thinking young men and women are making earnest inquiry about, for most of them have been taught from their childhood that to admit the possibility of mistake in the Bible is to invalidate and destroy the book. We may well, then, attempt to give it a careful and candid examination.

If one has not been educated to accept the alternative concerning the Bible of "all or nothing," the first thing that is likely to strike him when he meets it is its strangeness,—its utter unlikeness to what men say about anything else.

Concerning everything else we discriminate, discern, use judgment. The mind that can see nothing but the two opposite extremes of a matter—that can discern no gradations between—we set down as a defective mind. If one studies the sun, he does not begin by forming a theory that it is either all bright or else all dark ; and when the telescope reveals to him the fact that there are dark spots upon a face otherwise bright, he does not say, No, I will not have it so : to admit the existence of any spots will destroy the sun.

When a man is about to travel through :

strange country, he does not decide beforehand that it is either all fertile or all barren, and then go through it with his eyes closed to everything that is contrary to his preconception.

When a man undertakes the study of Shakespeare, or Dante, or Plato, or Homer, he does not say, I shall "accept all or throw all away." He sees that such a resolve would be folly.

Why, then, should men, when they approach the Bible, adopt this canon of judgment, the folly of which they see instantly when applied to anything else?

As a fact, the broadest and most intelligent minds do not accept any such view.

Let us see what a few leading scholars and religious teachers say.

Says Professor Ladd, of Yale: "No course is so wise, safe, and really loyal to the Bible as that which admits, without hesitation, the possibility of historical errors in the sacred writings, and then proceeds without disturbance of faith and in the spirit of fairness to determine to what extent such errors actually exist."

Says Professor C. H. Toy, of Harvard: "Great harm has been done by the indiscriminate defence of crude biblical statements and ideas, historical inaccuracies, discrepancies, and imperfect scientific and ethical ideas."

Says Archdeacon Farrar, of the Church of England: "The limitations of human language and the disabilities of human infirmity

were not miraculously removed from those who were chosen as the channels of divine revelation."

Says the distinguished English biblical scholar, Dr. Samuel Davidson: "Inspiration properly belongs to persons, not to books. The authors of the different works contained in the collection called the Bible — of most of whom we know little or nothing, sometimes not even the name — were men of various intelligence and endowments. Possessing unequal gifts, their productions are of unequal value. As infallibility belongs to God alone, none of them was infallible in what he said or wrote. Each wrote according to his light and the purpose he had in view. Contradictions, inconsistencies, errors both intellectual and moral, are observable in their writings."

Says Dr. R. Heber Newton, the eminent Broad Church Episcopal clergyman of New York: "Our sacred books are not superhuman but human works, natural and not supernatural in their origin; for most part by no means certainly the productions of the authors to whom they have been assigned traditionally, and very certainly of considerably later date than that thus assigned to many of them; the historical works, assuredly, as they now stand, the result of several hands and many re-editings; all of them manifesting the limitations of ordinary literature in their reasonings, their historical references, and their interpretation of earlier sacred writings."

Says Professor Briggs: "So far as I can see, there are errors in the scriptures that no one has been able to explain away. . . . If such errors destroy the authority of the Bible, it is already destroyed for historians. Men cannot shut their eyes to truth and fact. But on what authority do these theologians drive men from the Bible by this theory of inerrancy? The Bible itself nowhere makes this claim. . . . It is a ghost of modern evangelicalism to frighten children."

Now shall we accuse these eminent Christian scholars of attempting to destroy the Bible? Indeed is there any reason for believing that their love for it is any less real than that of Mr. Moody, Mr. Spurgeon, Mr. Talmage, the prosecutors of Dr. Briggs, and the rest, who tell us that every word within its covers is from God, and that we must either accept it all or reject it all?

How many of us know the story of the great biblical critic, Ernest Renan, how in his young manhood he came to leave Catholicism? He was a student in the famous Roman Catholic theological seminary of St. Sulpice, in Paris. The career opening before him in the Church was a most promising one. But as he went forward with his careful studies of the Bible, he found to his surprise that it is "no more exempt," to use his own words, "than any other ancient book, from contradictions, inadvertencies, and errors." He discovered in it unmistakable evidences of fable and

legend, and other traces of purely human composition. He found proofs, not to be gainsaid, that Moses did not write the Pentateuch. The last part of the book of Isaiah he saw must be ascribed to a different hand from that which produced the first part. He came upon "irreconcilable divergencies between the synoptists (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and the Fourth Gospel, and between the synoptists compared with one another." Especially was he disturbed by the evidences which modern critics had brought to light that the book of Daniel, so called, could not have been written by Daniel, or at the time of the exile, as the Roman Catholic Church taught, but really was a composite structure, apocryphal in its character, and dating as late as the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, in the year 169 or 170 before Christ,—that is to say *after* some of the events which it was supposed to predict *had taken place*.

Well, with all this new light regarding the nature of the Bible, what could the young student at St. Sulpice do? Ought he to have thrown the book away, since he could not any longer accept it all? But that would have been as dishonest, nay as impossible, as to accept all; for large parts of it he found to be reliable. Its devotional poetry was the finest in the world; its morals and religion were of inestimable value, and were independent of the theory of Bible infallibility; and Jesus was the one character in history for

whom he felt the profoundest love and reverence. His course soon became plain. He must leave the Church where mental freedom was denied him, and take an independent position where he would be at liberty to follow the light of truth. This is the way the world came to have its Renan, the independent Bible scholar.

How many of us know the still more interesting and impressive story of Bishop Colenso, of the Church of England? Colenso was a learned, devout, and trusted clergyman of that Church, the author of books on mathematics and other subjects which brought him much fame. Having been appointed Bishop of Natal, in South Africa, he undertook among other labors the translation of the Bible into the language of the Zulus. While he was at work translating the stories of Genesis, he had the question of Bible infallibility forced upon his attention as it had never been. Previously he had taken the infallibility theory for granted. Occasionally he had felt some of its difficulties, but had put them aside. But now it was forced upon him in a way that allowed him no escape. The story is best told in his own language. He says: "While translating the story of the flood, I had a simple-minded but intelligent native,—one with the docility of a child, but with the reasoning powers of mature age,—look up and ask: 'Is all that true? Do you really believe that all this happened thus,—that all the beasts, and

birds, and creeping things upon the earth, large and small, from hot countries and cold, came thus by pairs, and entered the ark with Noah? And did Noah gather *food* for them *all*, for the beasts and birds of prey, as well as the rest?"

Says the Bishop: "My heart answered in the words of the prophet, 'Shall a man speak lies in the name of the Lord?' I dared not do so. My own knowledge of some branches of science, of geology in particular, had been much increased since I left England; and I now knew for certain, on geological grounds, a fact of which I had only had misgivings before,—namely, that a universal deluge, such as the Bible manifestly speaks of, could not possibly have taken place in the way described in the book of Genesis, not to mention other difficulties which the story contains. . . . Knowing this, I felt that I dared not, as a servant of the God of truth, urge my brother man to believe, as a historical narrative, that which I did not myself believe, and which I knew to be untrue."

Now under these circumstances what ought Bishop Colenso to have done? Should he have told that earnest Zulu, who trusted him, to throw the Bible all away? And then should he have thrown it all away himself, because he could not accept the legend of a universal deluge as a historic fact? Or ought he to have exercised reason and judgment in the matter, as he would have done in other things?

As a candid and honest man, he adopted

the latter course, and as a result gave up the old theory of Bible infallibility, which he saw had no basis of truth, and adopted a view in harmony with the facts: a view which makes the inspiration of the past not a fetter upon men's souls to-day, but a liberator and a quickener; a view which teaches that the Bible is a great and precious light shining on man's path, but that God is greater than any possible Bible, and that the real foundations of religion are in God and the soul of man, and therefore cannot be overthrown by the mere discovery of the fallibility of texts, inside the Bible or out.

In the face of such experiences as these of the devout and noble-minded Bishop of Natal, how shallow seems the view that would identify the foundations of religion with a book; and especially how shallow seems that conception of a great and many-sided literature like the Bible that would apply to it the cheap and senseless rule, "all or none,"—"accept the whole or reject the whole"!

One of the most difficult of all things to account for is the fact that, with the Bible itself before men's eyes, so that they need only look to see its imperfections, the doctrine that it is an infallible book, with no imperfections, could ever have come into men's belief. How did the doctrine arise?

I suppose it is generally taken for granted that the Bible itself *claims* to be infallible. But this is a mistake. There is much in it

that negatives such a claim. The biblical writers turn us in upon ourselves, bidding us to "prove all things," casting out the evil and retaining the good. Jesus says, "Why of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" Both the Old Testament and the New abound in appeals from external authorities of all kinds, to the reason, the hearts, the consciences of men. The imperfections of the various Bible characters—even some that are most distinguished and honored—are freely pointed out.

We think of David as one of the inspired writers of the Old Testament. Yet David's sins are portrayed as many and black. Plainly the prophet Nathan had no idea of David's infallibility when he confronted him with a foul murder which he had committed, and declared to him sternly, "Thou art the man."

We think of Peter as one of the inspired writers of the New Testament. But it is clear that Matthew did not regard him as infallible when he wrote the record of Peter's denying three times that he was a disciple of Jesus.

It is plain, too, that Paul did not know of any such infallibility when he wrote of Peter on one occasion, "I withstood him face to face, because he was to be blamed."

There are several passages of scripture which are often quoted as proving that the Bible claims to be infallible. But I think a moment of careful looking at each shows that they prove nothing of the kind.

(1) One is that terrible passage (terrible is not too strong a word) found at the end of the Apocalypse or Revelation, the last book in our New Testament. This is the passage: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book." About this passage several things are to be said.

First, the intelligence, heart and conscience of man cannot permanently accept any such curse as a part of a true revelation of God. The Church of England is getting ashamed of the curses of its Athanasian Creed, and its best men are trying to get them laid aside as unworthy of anything calling itself Christianity. The curses or imprecations in the Psalms the world has outgrown; we now see that they sprung from the imperfect moral development of the age which produced them, and that it was a mistake ever to have brought them the word of God. Precisely the same is true of this curse by which the writer of the book of Revelation thinks to prevent anybody from making any changes in his book.

Dean Trench pens truer Bible when he writes: —

“I say to thee, Do thou repeat
 To the first man thou mayest meet
 In lane, highway, or open street,
 That he and we and all men move
 Under a canopy of *love*,—
Blessing, not cursing, rules above.”

By the very fact that it is a *curse* this Apocalypse passage condemns itself, and compels its own rejection as the utterance not of God, but of a very imperfect man.

Further, the book of Revelation, which contains the passage, is one of the most doubtful and disputed of all the books of the Bible as to its canonicity or right to be in the Bible. Many of the Christian Fathers and of the early churches rejected it. Some councils refused to accept it. Even the Council of Laodicea (363), which is affirmed by some to have settled the canon, cast the book out. In all the Christian ages it has been a question among scholars whether it has any right in the New Testament. Luther was decidedly of the opinion that it has not, so was Zwingli. Even Calvin denounced it as unintelligible, and forbade his pastors at Geneva from all attempts at interpreting it. We see, then, how little weight ought to attach to an utterance, especially to a curse, found in this writing.

But even if we attach weight to the passage and believe that God really will curse any who add or subtract from “the words of the prophecy of this book,” the “this book” re-

fers *not* to the *Bible*, as some seem to suppose, or even to the *New Testament*, but only to the *single book of Revelation*, or the *Apocalypse itself*. The New Testament did not exist at that time. Only a part of its books had been written, and those that were written had not been gathered together into one collection. To get the New Testament in any such form as *we* have it, the world had to wait more than a century longer.

(2) Another scripture passage often quoted to prove that the Bible claims to be infallible, is that found in Second Peter: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Of this text two things are to be said.

First, it is found in one of the most questionable of the New Testament books, many authorities having always regarded the Second Epistle of Peter as ungenuine. Professor Hilgenfeld says: "The composition of this Epistle by the apostle Peter is out of the question. We must look [for its date] to the second half of the second century. It is not till the third century that we find the first trace of any knowledge of this Epistle; and even as late as the beginning of the fifth century the majority rejected it." So much, then, as to the right of the passage to a place in the New Testament at all.

But, further, even if we admit the passage to be true scripture, it does not prove the infallibility of the Bible or of the men who

speaking to us through the Bible. Go into a meeting of Quakers or Friends, and you find all waiting for the moving or prompting of the Holy Ghost before they speak. Indeed, not only among the Quakers, but in all Christian churches holy men to-day claim to speak as moved by the Holy Ghost. But they do not for this reason profess to be infallible.

(3) But the passage that is oftenest quoted as proof that the Bible claims to be infallible is found in 2 Tim. iii. 16. In our common version it reads: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

The first thing to be pointed out regarding this text is the same that has had to be pointed to in the case of each of the others: It is found in one of the unauthentic and in every way most questionable books of the New Testament. The book stands in our common English Bible with the heading: "The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy"; and it begins with the words, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to Timothy, my dearly beloved son." But scholars believe this to be unreliable. Professor Pfeiderer says of the Epistle: "The tradition of its Pauline origin may be traced back as far as the second century, A.D., but may nevertheless be proved by adequate historical evidence to be erroneous." He thinks the second century is the true date of the Epistle.

But this is more than a generation after Paul's death. Davidson, expressing not only his own view, but that of many other scholars, says, "We rest in the conclusion that the author was a Pauline Christian who lived in Rome in the first part of the second century." This, then, is the first thing to be borne in mind in considering the passage before us: it is at least very questionable whether it came from Paul, or any apostle, and therefore whether it has any proper claim to a place in the New Testament.

But even if we should concede it to be a genuine utterance of Paul, it does not teach the infallibility of the Bible. It has long been held by the best scholars that the passage as it stands in our common version is a mistranslation of the original Greek. And now if we turn to the Revised New Testament, we shall find that even so conservative men as the authors of this revision discard the old translation as incorrect, and give us this instead: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction," etc.,—an utterance which nobody doubts, and which cannot possibly be used as proof that the Bible is infallible. *Of course* every scripture *that is inspired of God* is profitable,—whether it be found in the New Testament or the Old, or even if it comes to us through wholly other channels than the Bible.

So much, then, for the passages which are

most often quoted as proofs that the Bible claims to be an infallible book.

The truth is, as already stated, that it claims nothing of the kind. On the contrary, various things in it go to show that some of its most important writers and teachers understood that it was not infallible.

Paul teaches over and over, and with the greatest emphasis, that the whole Old Testament sacrificial law and ceremonial system were imperfect and have been abolished. Even the "Ten Commandments" of Moses, which we should regard as sacred if any part of the Old Testament is, he calls "the ministration of death written and engraven on stones," which is superseded by the law of Christ, written "not on tables of stone, but on fleshly tables of the heart." Could Paul have written in that way if he had regarded the Old Testament as infallible?

Jesus goes nearly or quite as far as Paul in breaking in pieces the infallibility idea. In his Sermon on the Mount, referring to various teachings in the Old Testament, he declares, "It hath been said by them of old time" so and so, "but I say unto you" it is so and so,—different, even the very opposite in important respects from what the Old Testament teaches.

No, the doctrine of Bible infallibility does not come from the Bible itself. The old Testament knows nothing of it; the new Testament contradicts it. Nor is this all: the

early Christian Church knew nothing of it. In the rigid form in which it has been taught by modern Protestants, it was unknown until the time of the German Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church has never taught it; Rome locates her infallibility in her Church, not in the Bible. The theologians of the Protestant Reformation, finding themselves confronted by the declared infallibility of the Romish Church, in self-defence set up a counter infallibility in the Bible. But they had no more ground for theirs than Rome had for hers; that is to say, there was no ground for either. Indeed the *earlier* and *greater* reformers did not hold to Bible infallibility at all. Some of the strongest utterances against it that we have from any source, come from Luther.

It requires only a very slight examination of the way in which the Bible came into existence, and of the manner in which it has come down to us, to see that any claim of infallibility for it can be only words without meaning.

If the Bible were a single book, the case would be different. But it is not: it is a *collection* of *sixty-six* books,—representing different lands, different languages, different ages, some of them a thousand years apart, different degrees of civilization, different conditions of life, different stages of religious development,—and made up of legend, myth, history, biography, laws, predictions, pro-

erbs, poetry in various forms, ecclesiastical rituals, didactic teachings, indeed almost every known form of literature. It is a collection of what survives, or of the best of what survives, of the many-sided literature of the Jewish people for a thousand years,— literature which came into existence in the same *natural* ways in which literature always arises, and which bears exactly the same marks of the ages and the men and the circumstances that produced it, that literature always bears.

The authorship of the majority of these writings is unknown, as would naturally be the case. There is great uncertainty about the dates of many. Some are collections made nobody knows by whom,—as the book of Psalms, which is the Jewish hymn-book; and the book of Proverbs, which is a collection of pithy sayings current among the people. Many of the books are compilations; some are compilations of compilations, as the Pentateuch, and one or two of the Gospels. Does all this look like infallibility?*

Consider the manner in which the Canon was formed; that is, the way in which it was decided what books should be regarded as true scripture and what should not. The whole process was a most uncertain and haphazard affair.

The Jews assigned different degrees of

* For a more extended treatment of this subject, see the author's book, "The Bible Its Origin, Growth and Character," chaps. iv. to xiv.

value and authority to the books of the Old Testament; and some which we rank highest, as the Psalms, they ranked lowest, and hardly thought of them as sacred scripture at all. The Old Testament Canon was never really closed. Some books were left out whose moral and religious value is much higher than that of some which are in. The Roman Catholic Old Testament contains fourteen more books than does the Old Testament of Protestants.

Almost equally haphazard was the formation of the New Testament Canon. Probably few if any of the New Testament books were written with any idea on the part of the writers that they would ever become Bible. They were written simply to meet certain needs. For a long time such information as was conveyed to the people about Jesus was given by persons who remembered him and the things he had said. But as the generation that heard him passed away, the need began to be felt for written memorials of him. Hence one and another wrote down what he remembered. Out of these fragmentary memoranda came our Gospels.

Paul, when he had established churches in various cities distant from each other, naturally wrote them letters for their instruction and guidance. Naturally, these letters, or the more important of them, would be preserved, and to some extent would be copied and sent to other churches for their reading. Such

was the origin and early use of Paul's Epistles.

It was natural, too, that some historic account should be written of the labors, travels and sufferings of the other chief apostles in planting the seed of the New Christianity. Such an account we have in the book of Acts.

Not less natural was it that sooner or later efforts should be made to *collect together* these precious memorials of the beloved master, and these prized records and epistles of the first apostles of the new faith, and that the collections made should be much prized. This was just what happened. But of course the collections did not all agree. And as the churches were far apart, with little communication between them, and as printing was unknown, and as great numbers of spurious gospels, and writings falsely purporting to be the work of apostles, came into existence, and as the age was uncritical, it is not strange that much uncertainty arose as to what writings were authentic, or that into the best collections some found their way that were not genuine.

The New Testament Canon, as well as the Old, was never really settled at all. It was a matter of dispute all through the history of the ancient Church. The Church Fathers differed among themselves as to what books ought to be in; and the councils that voted upon the matter came to conflicting decisions.

Thus it happens that we have in our New Testament to-day, side by side with books that are genuine and certainly from the hands of apostles, other books claiming to be apostolic, which our best scholars are practically a unit in declaring cannot have come from apostles or even from writers living in the apostolic age.*

These facts alone, as to how the books of the Bible were written and gathered together, surely are enough to show the utter baselessness of the doctrine of scripture infallibility. Yet these facts are only a few out of the long array that passes before us as soon as we open our eyes and really begin to look into the matter.

The Hebrew language at the time when the Old Testament books came into existence, and for some centuries after, was not capable of becoming the medium of an infallible revelation. That language was written in consonant outline only: its vowels are all later additions. It is easy to see that infallibility could not have been secured through such an imperfect written vehicle.

Jesus probably spoke Aramaic. Thus his words required translating into Greek before they found a place in the Gospels; and to reach us in English they must be translated again. Are we to suppose that God has miraculously guarded these translations against possible error?

* On the origin of the Old and New Testament Canons see the author's "The Bible: Its Origin, Growth," etc., chaps. xv. and xvi.

I ought to speak of the great uncertainty that attaches to the transmission of literature by the process of hand-copying. All the books of the Bible were transmitted in this way for many centuries — in the case of some of the Old Testament books, for more than fifteen centuries. Think how great was the liability for interpolations and errors of copyists to creep in. The variations in such ancient manuscripts as we possess reach the enormous number of hundreds of thousands. Most of these variations, of course, are comparatively trivial; but some of them are very important. For example, that passage in the First Epistle of John about the “three heavenly witnesses,” which has been regarded as the strongest bulwark of the doctrine of the Trinity, is not found in the oldest manuscripts, and the Revised Version omits it. In the two oldest manuscripts the last twelve verses of the Gospel of Mark are wanting. So, too, most of the ancient manuscripts omit in the Gospel of John all from the seventh chapter and fifty-second verse to the eighth chapter and twelfth verse.

Thus we see that the task of getting an infallible Bible is one beset with difficulties that are simply mountainous. Indeed, to get such a Bible requires not only that every book, chapter, verse and word of all this vast and varied mass of literature should have been infallibly written, but also that it should have been infallibly preserved for centuries, infal-

libly copied by all the tens of thousands of scribes who have had to do with it, infallibly gathered into a canon, infallibly translated, and infallibly handed down to our day.

And even with all this, it can practically amount to nothing unless we are given also an infallible interpreter. If a dozen of us interpret a text of scripture in a dozen different ways, as is not uncommon, what good is there in the claim that the book from which it comes is infallible? Or if the Christian world is divided into two or three hundred sects, as in fact it is, all understanding the Bible differently, what does it avail for each to hold a so-called infallible Bible in its hand?

But it is in the *errors*, *contradictions*, and *imperfect moral teachings* of the Bible, that we see most clearly of all that the theory of the infallibility of the book is utterly without foundation.

There is no use trying to evade it; the Bible contains errors of many kinds.*

It contains incredible stories, as for example those of the talking serpent, the speaking ass, and Jonah living three days in the fish.

It contains historic inaccuracies, as the statement in Luke that the governor of Syria at the time of the birth of Jesus was Cyrenius (Quirinus), when in fact it was Quintus Sentius Saturninus.

It contains contradictions, as when in connection with David's numbering of Israel we

*On the errors and contradictions found in the scriptures, see "The Bible: Its Origin, Growth," etc., chaps. xx. and xxi.

are told in one place that it was the devil and in another that it was the Lord that tempted him to do the numbering.

It contains exaggerations, as when the statement is made that Jeroboam, the king of only about one-half of little Palestine (the whole of Palestine was smaller than New Hampshire) went into a certain battle with 800,000 picked men, and of that number lost 500,000, a number twice as large as the combined armies of North and South at the battle of Gettysburg.

It contains contradictions of science, as when we are told of the sun standing still for some hours; of a universal flood; and of the creation of the world in six days.

It contains cruel, unjust and immoral teachings, as in the imprecatory Psalms (cix. and cxxxvii.); the injunction to establish slavery (Lev. xxv. 44-46); the permission to sell bad meat to strangers (Deut. xiv. 21); and the command, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

It contains morally degrading representations of God, as in Exodus (vii. 13 and xi. 10), where we are told that God hardened Pharaoh's heart that he should not let the children of Israel go, and then punished him severely for not letting them go; and in Joshua x. (28-41), where the leader of the Israelites is commanded of God to murder inoffending women and helpless babes.*

* See "The Bible: Its Origin, Growth," etc., pp. 237-246.

Now, what are we to say to all these various and overwhelming proofs that the Bible is not an infallible book? It does no good to say they do not exist. They do exist. They confront us, and we cannot escape them. Standing face to face with these evidences, can any man who cares at all for the Bible propose the alternative, "All or nothing: accept the whole volume as from God and infallible, or throw it all away"?

It is hardly possible to conceive of a proposition more absurd or more dangerous to the Bible. It makes us realize with painful force the truth of the saying that there are no such enemies of any cause or institution as its short-sighted "friends."

Is it not high time an appeal were being made, loud and long, to thoughtful and honest people everywhere, to rise above all this strange un wisdom, this folly of speech, this intemperance of claim, and begin treating the Bible with the same honesty, candor and intelligence with which they treat other books? Does our duty to the Bible require us to lie for it? or to make pretences about it which intelligent inquiry shows are not true? or to shut our eyes against facts? Are we afraid of truth? Shame on such scepticism! Let us have no fear lest the Bible cannot endure the light. If it cannot stand without being bolstered up with make-believes, it ought to fall.

But we need have no fear of its falling if

we let the honest truth appear. It has too solid worth for that. It is not an infallible book, but it is a great book. And never did its real greatness so plainly appear as since the higher criticism of our day has begun to dispel the cloud of imaginary supernaturalism and fictitious inerrancy that has so long wrapped it about, and to reveal it to us as what it really is, the richest and highest creation of the religious life of man that has come down to us out of the great past,—a book at once human and divine, as man is both human and divine; God's book, because so profoundly man's book; and because man's book, therefore reflecting on the one side man's weakness, and on the other his strength; on the one hand his ignorances, mistakes, failures, sins, and on the other hand his knowledge, growing larger with the advancing ages, his deepening insight, his rising ethical and spiritual ideals, his battles with his lower self, his longings, his heroisms, his faith now weak and fitful, now triumphing over sense and time and death, and laying hold of the very omnipotence and eternity of God.

Why should we fear to know or to speak the truth regarding such a book? Grant that in the light of the Higher Criticism we see the Bible to contain a large element of legend, as it certainly does, what of that? The same scholarship shows that it contains a still larger element of reliable and very valuable history. And the legends themselves become

of great value as soon as we confess them to be legend, and give up the foolish task of trying to make history out of them. Then why not accept both for exactly what they are? *

Grant, too, that the Bible contains mistakes, historical, statistical, scientific, and others, as we have seen. What of that? When we remember the great size of the book, or in other words the great extent and variety of the literature that makes up the book, the long time it covers, and especially the early and uncritical age of the world from which much of it comes, the real wonder is, not that it contains mistakes, but that it does not contain more.

Grant, as we are compelled to grant, that there are predictions in the Bible that have never come to pass, and some which in the nature of the case never can come to pass. Shall this blind our eyes to the fact that prediction is not the largest or most important element of the prophetic literature of the Old Testament? Wipe away all prediction that even suggests a miraculous character, and the moral and religious teachings of this literature remain practically undisturbed. The truth is, the Old Testament prophets as a class are among the most sincere and heroic reformers the world has ever seen; and, in spite of the failure of many of their predictions, much that they have written has passed

* See "The Bible: Its Origin, Growth," etc., chap. vii.

into the permanent moral and religious life of the world.*

Go still further, and grant, as we must, that there are in the Bible imperfect moral teachings,—savage war songs; brutal imprecations against foes (so different from Jesus' "Love your enemies, bless and curse not"); selfish proverbs; sceptical, pessimistic and materialistic philosophizings and maxims of life; representations of God as cruel, vindictive, jealous, deceitful, unjust,—a being almost infinitely removed in character from the righteous and loving Heavenly Father of Jesus. Must we throw away the Bible on account of these? Yes, if these represent the whole Bible, or even its prevailing teachings. But every student knows that they do not.†

If we are intelligent and honest, when we come to the imperfections of the Bible, we shall do two things.

First, we shall accept the facts, whatever they are, denying nothing and suppressing nothing that is true.

Second, we shall seek and find our explanation of these imperfections partly in the fact that the volume is not a single book, but a *vast and miscellaneous literature*, and partly in the still more significant fact that it is a record of the life and thought of a people during *a thousand years of growth, progress, evolution*, from barbarism up to high civiliza-

* See "The Bible: Its Origin, Growth," etc., chap. viii.

† Ibid., chaps. xix. and xxi.

tion; from intellectual, social and moral conditions scarcely above those of the cruel and degraded polytheistic nations around them, up to the ethics of the Golden Rule and the religion of the Lord's Prayer. Of course a literature that is the truthful outcome of such an evolution must contain views of nature that are unscientific, records of events wanting sometimes in historical accuracy, morals low as well as high, and views of God unworthy as well as worthy.

Thus we are no longer surprised or troubled by the imperfections we find in the Bible. We see that it would not be truthful if it did not contain just such imperfections

Instead of saying that the moral and religious teachings found in such books as Joshua and Judges and Samuel are infallible truth and wisdom, and such therefore as we ought to shape our lives by to-day, we must say, No, they came from a half-civilized age and people; they represent the moral child-stage of the Hebrew race; they are conceptions which even the Jewish people themselves outgrew, passing on from them up to the higher and truer conceptions of the later prophets, of the better Psalms, and finally of Paul and Jesus. So that instead of our being bound to accept them, we are bound not to accept them; the Bible itself teaches something higher and better.*

Not very long before the death of Phillips

* On the progress or evolution of religious ideas in the Old Testament, see "The Bible: Its Origin, Growth," etc., chap. xix.

Brooks I had an opportunity to hear a sermon from that great preacher in Trinity Church, Boston, where he had so long ministered. He took for his text one of the terrible imprecations found in the Psalms, and went forward in the name of truth and of religion to tell us, without the slightest hesitation, that the Psalmist's prayer for curses and evil to fall upon his enemies was not to be regarded as from God,—it was simply the imperfect and mistaken utterance of a man who lived in a darker age than ours, whose thought of God had advanced only to that point; but the growth of the world since, and especially the influence of Christianity, have carried us forward to where we see that the old conception was crude and imperfect and must be laid aside. We must be guided by those writers of the Old Testament who show the greatest clearness of moral and spiritual vision, and especially by Jesus and his apostles in the New Testament, not by the men of less moral elevation and insight. In other words, we must discriminate. The Bible has its precious truths; but it has also its errors and imperfections. Hence we must carry to it the same open eyes and discerning judgment that we do to everything else in life.

Now why did Dr. Brooks say this? He said it because he was obliged to say it as an honest man. It was what not only his own studies, but the scholarship of the world, compelled him to say; and what ere long no man

who values his reputation for candor and intelligence will think of denying.

Our conservative friends seem often to insist on the alternative "all or none" with the purpose of compelling persons to accept the Bible in its entirety who otherwise would not. They know that few are willing to throw it all away; so then, if they can convince the people that there is no alternative but that of rejecting it all or accepting it all, of course many will be driven to accept it all. It is a sort of coercive process.

But what are its results? They are melancholy enough. It tends to make hypocrites; under this pressure, many will profess to believe all who do not and cannot.

It tends to kill thought and inquiry, and to make men narrow bigots; for the only way men who have once opened their eyes to the imperfections of the Bible can ever again accept it all as truth, is to intellectually stultify themselves.

It tends to produce utter rejecters of the Bible and religion. Many, too honest to pretend to believe what they cannot believe, take the preachers and religious teachers at their word, and say: "Very well, if it is accept all or reject all, then we reject all. Think, we will; reason, we will; if the Bible and religion require us to fetter our intellects and believe black is white, we prefer to turn our backs upon the whole thing, and go with Mr. Ingersoll." And that is largely the reason

why the followers of Mr. Ingersoll are numbered by the tens and hundreds of thousands. This foolish, this baseless, this wicked alternative, urged by short-sighted and ignorant preachers and others, drives men into unbelief and rejection of all religion. And nothing can ever bring them back but rational views of the Bible and religion, such as are urged in this paper. These can do it, are doing it.

This is the immensely important work given to the independent, fearless, truth-loving scholars, and to the liberal churches, of our age to do,—to preserve reverence for the Bible and for religion in the thousands of thinking people of the land whom the dogma of Bible infallibility, especially this dogma in its most short-sighted form of “The Bible, all or none,” has pushed far off toward permanent infidelity and indifference, if not hostility, to everything religious.

No, the Bible is not all true; but neither is it all false. It cannot be all accepted, unless one is willing to shut his eyes, push aside the scholarship of the world, and trample on his own reason and intelligence. But much of it can be accepted, ought to be accepted, must be accepted, unless we are willing to violate every principle of correct literary and moral judgment, and deeply injure ourselves and mankind.

That moral and spiritual element in the Bible, which grows ever brighter and brighter in the Old Testament, and which shines with

such splendor in the New, especially in Jesus, is its own evidence. Nobody can gainsay it; nobody wants to gainsay it. It commends itself, and forever must commend itself, to the best judgment and conscience of mankind.

The simple truth is, there are two Bibles. One is the old and outgrown Bible of tradition, credulity and ignorance. The other is the new, fresh, living, imperishable Bible of inquiry, scholarship and intelligence.

The old Bible of a darker past, which fettered reason and hindered progress — the Bible of declared verbal infallibility, of miracles and marvels and supernaturalisms literally believed, of crude morals and low views of God accepted without question — is dead, and ought to be buried. The science, the criticism, the free inquiry, the growing intelligence, the rising ethical standards of our time, have slain it. It cannot be again brought to life. And it is fortunate alike for civilization and for religion that it cannot.

But in place of it a new Bible is appearing, — a new Bible which is in every way nobler than the old; which is literature, not dogma; which is as natural as Homer and as fresh as the unspoiled human heart; in which incredible stories are softened into legend; in which impossible history is transformed into myth and poetry; in which all low morals and unworthy views of God are seen to be simply the imperfect conception of an early time, — a new Bible which reveals in a way

that finds no parallel in history or literature the growing ethical sense, the rising spiritual ideals, the ever deepening God-consciousness, the marvellous, the providential, the thousand-year-long religious evolution, of an extraordinary people. This new Bible—which is the old interpreted in the light of a larger intelligence, and born into the higher life of the spirit—will never die, and can never lose its power among men.

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THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS

BY A WORK-WOMAN

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

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WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

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THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS.

BY A WORK-WOMAN.

WHEN I was younger, I laughed and cried in equal measure when merry or sad. Now there is little laughter or weeping; but I often smile, which tells a tale of "past twenty-five." In my 'teen days the pride and pleasure of earning my own living bubbled up in high spirits like a perpetual fountain, and the hope of gaining riches was always present in the background of my thoughts as a vague inspiration. By and by the daily journey to the city grew less amusing. Weary faces passed me in the crowd. Girls who had been bright and alert now looked soberly pitiful, and the tripping gait had changed to patient, tired plodding. The streets, once full of gay variety, changed to a dull procession of laboring people and noisy traffic, going ever forward under the sharp crack of Taskmaster Poverty's whip.

Then I began to wonder what was wrong. Had I changed also? Was I like those girls who suddenly were anxious women? My little looking-glass and my heart answered with solemn regret, "Yes." Lines across mouth and brow, sunken spaces around my eyes, life sinking out of skin and hair, echoed the mournful truth, adding, "And in ten years more!" It was terrible. Something must be done. But what?

First, there must be causes for the change. On the instant many tiny voices that had sometimes uttered a cry I had scarcely heard blended themselves into articulate expression. "Women are not meant to fight the world's battle," they said in derisive tones. "Girls have been misled in this generation by women with false appetites craving for publicity and equality. A woman is always equal to a man—in her own sphere of womanhood. Women need homes and love. They have left them for the will-o'-the-wisps of independence and freedom. And by the time they are thirty they are engulfed in the bog of restless dissatisfaction and despair. Oh that a reaction may come quickly, and the next generation revert to hearth, home, and children!"

That may all be true, said I; but what is done cannot be undone. Here am I on the edge of the bog. How to avoid being sucked into sourness and heart-hunger? I observe that there is a crisis in the space which intervenes between the ages of thirty and forty in the lives of single women. Many become outwardly callous, sour, and cynical,—most horrible characteristics in creatures meant to display sympathy, sweetness, and faith. *Must* I become only a tired, disappointed, disillusioned woman?

"No," replied a strong voice, which I recognized as that of my soul. "You are poor, lonely, and obscure; but you may live in beauty and light, serving your day and generation nobly. Not for you are home, husband, and love, yet you may find resting-places and affection everywhere. Lift your thoughts to Heaven: the heart of woman was fashioned there, and there alone is it understood. Across the sky you will find written in letters of living gold

the motto of the angels and the secret of happiness. It is contained in one word, 'others.' The tide of love, if denied outlet, will suffocate and torment its possessor. Therefore take the whole world to your bosom. Love all, good and bad, old and young. You will soon find your store of affection exhausted, yet constantly renewed from the adorable Source of love who bids the sun warm just and unjust. Put yourself away. Live to help your neighbor, who is the person happening to be next you at the moment. Resolve that no day shall pass wherein you have not tried to perform an unselfish and kindly deed. It is an old secret, this, but the only true one."

So I took my soul's advice, and entered on the path of happiness. Never was effort better repaid. The world has become the ante-chamber of paradise. I began by trying to love secretly the people I met in the street, and particularly those who appeared to me most disagreeable. Presently this exercise resulted in a glow of pleasure within myself, and a true desire that the awkward circumstances which had caused the apparent ill-humor of these individuals might be lessened or transformed. In the early mornings, in the crowded trains, a habit grew of silently wishing each man and woman in the compartment a good and happy day, and of asking the blessing of the Holy upon them.

My small wage became ample for small aids to my fellow-pilgrims in the world. Opportunities for tiny kindnesses of word, look, and deed opened at every step. It was amazing to find multitudes of good hearts, of grateful and understanding eyes, of lips ready to smile, thronging the great English city which often seems as if it existed merely to grasp wealth and

worship Mammon. But that is but the surface. Day by day I go my way, seeing many, speaking to some, hearing more; and in all the days I have never discovered a wholly bad man or woman. In every heart there is a sacred chamber, with an altar and the dove of purity and love above it. Sometimes the chamber is very contracted and the altar very poor; but—they are there, and may be expanded into wondrous height and breadth and beauty.

I am a happy woman. As the years go on, the happiness will deepen. No longer are the streets dull and gray, and my brother and sister toilers ill-favored. The more worn they are, the more love they need. If the sun shines, all the gleams fall my way, and I ask that the brightest and warmest may fall on those who need them most. When I cannot give, I ask the One who has all to supply the needy. The hours are crowded with pictures and pleasures. The river that used to be muddy and speak of the madness and misery it covered sings songs under the old stone arches now. At night I go to sleep with the memory of a child's confiding look, an old woman's hand-clasp, a beauty's condescending, amused glance, a beggar's blessing, or some such mighty trifle to make me glad. Winds among the few trees, rain making roofs and gutters bright, sun glinting on the rich man's carriage and the poor man's barrow, sky and clouds, stones and brown ground, houses and animals,—they all have their messages, and talk to me in sweetness. I am not lonely: nobody has so many friends. I am not poor: my wealth cannot be counted. I am not old: love is ever young. Sickness and the workhouse *may* come in the future. Well, there is a treasure that nothing, not death itself, can touch!

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THE MOTHER AND HER BOYS.

BY

MRS. BROOKE HERFORD

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
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THE MOTHER AND HER BOYS.

THE mother's one absorbing idea and desire, when a man-child is given to her, is that he may grow up to be a good man, that the world may be a little better for his manhood. I do not think a mother can do much to help the boy to become a good, useful man, unless she has this feeling from the beginning. Miss Edgeworth, in one of her stories, makes a mother say, "All boys are naturally little bears." While not able entirely to indorse this idea, I am free to confess there is some truth in it! But there is also another truth, beautifully put by Mrs. Barbauld, when she says, "Reverence in the infant the future man; in man the rudiments of the angel." Reverence — that is the thing we want. Love, in the mother, comes by nature; but this mere natural love, if unaccompanied by reverence and a thought for the future, is just as likely to lead her wrong as right. About the year 1492, in a little village in Germany, there was a schoolmaster, by name John

Trebonius, who had a curious habit of always raising his cap to salute his pupils when he entered the school-room. When some one expressed astonishment, he said: "There are, among these boys, men of whom God will one day make burgomasters, chancellors, doctors, magistrates. Although you do not see them with the badges of their dignity, it is right that we should treat them with respect." One of those little boys was a certain Martin Luther! I do not know that we could have a better illustration of the importance of our subject, and the spirit in which it should be regarded. It is, at least in all the early part, especially a mother's subject. At the same time, a complete man cannot be made without the help of the father; it takes both a good man and a good woman to train up a youth. I think that boys are often injured, sometimes almost ruined, by the mother absorbing too exclusively the confidence of her lads. More and more, as the lad grows up, he needs the influence and companionship of a good man. At the same time, in the earliest years, the chief influence does rest with the mother.

"We hardly know," says Dr. Martineau, "how soon the child once born in the image of God becomes twisted into our likeness, and spoiled by the contagion of our selfishness." I think we may take as especially concerning the mother the

period of life from infancy to the age of ten or twelve, when the boy is beginning to pass out into the wider influences of the world.

Passing on, then, to some of the main elements required in the building up of character, I must put first of all *Self-Control*. This seems to me the main line, which will run all through the life. I feel it to be of such importance, that I believe a child taught to exercise self-control, though not taught to read and write, will have a better chance of making a good man than one taught any quantity of learning without self-control. It is said of John Wesley's mother, that she whipped him when a baby in order to teach him to cry softly. Mrs. Wesley was a wise woman; she rightly estimated the value of this habit of self-control, and thought she could not begin with it too soon; though I cannot quite agree with her plan, and think that if a little more of the "patience of love" had tempered her firmness, John Wesley might have been even a better man than he was. But I would not let a child cry *ad libitum*; I would not let it eat *ad libitum*. The essential principle in teaching self-control is to begin with the mother's exercising quiet, firm control, and gradually relaxing it as reason and affection can be brought to bear upon the child, and he can be induced to exercise the same control over himself. It is not by any set lessons, so much as by the

opportunities which keep occurring in the daily life of the family.

It is harder work to teach a boy who is alone with his mother than one growing up with brothers and sisters. It is a misfortune to be an only child ; and I am inclined to think the advantages to the growth of character increase, rather than diminish, by the child being one of a large family.

In the teaching of self-control, it is very essential that the mother shall have firm control over herself. She wants self-control in not giving way to her child. A mother's love is so great and so unselfish that I am sure if mothers could only be brought to feel the importance of restraining their own pleasure in the delight of their children, and would look further ahead, they would make many more sacrifices than they do. It is so hard to say "no ;" it is so easy to say "yes," especially if we gain a little present relief, as well as the child a present pleasure. Restless caprice is almost one of the first trials of childhood, and motherhood, too ; but it opens the door for endless little lessons in self-control and order. Take an illustration from a little child playing: first, the child wants his blocks ; plays with them only a few minutes, perhaps does not play with them at all, but, as soon as they are fairly out on the floor, wants something else. Now it is a ball ; then nothing will satisfy him but a pencil and slate ;

and meanwhile all the other toys are left scattered about. The easiest plan for the mother, at the moment, is to let him go on in this way, and then put them away herself by and by. But the mother who looks to the future of her boy will not do so. Here is one of the opportunities of teaching self-control. But how? Not by merely telling the child he must keep to the blocks, and that he shall have nothing else; but by the mother herself trying to interest him in them, showing him perhaps some new thing to build, and in any case teaching him that they must be put orderly by, even though she has to assist him in doing this. All this of course takes trouble, but such moral lessons can no more be given without trouble than a writing or a reading lesson.

One element in self-control is letting children feel the consequences of their acts. The older idea of rewards and punishments was arbitrary. Luther said, "The apple should be placed beside the rod." But nowadays we see that a wiser kind of retribution may constantly be brought out of the very right or wrong-doing itself, without either apple or rod. For instance, a child will linger or dawdle over dressing, he is not ready for the drive or walk, — let him stay at home. He refuses to have his hands and face washed for dinner, — let him dine alone; he must not come to table. Weak parents, however, rather try to

shield their children from consequences ; but every time they do so they lose one of Nature's opportunities. One thing especially may be spoken of here, — the way in which a thoughtful mother may see the points at which heredity has caused some natural weakness or over-development, and do her part in the evolution of something better. The doctrine of evolution is all right, as long as we bear in mind how much of it we have in our own power. That first great desire of the mother's heart, that her boy should grow up a good man, if only kept steadily before her, will help her very much, and she will not feel anything too trifling or too small that shall be necessary from the very beginning to build up character.

Next to self-control I would place *Truthfulness and Honesty*. At the outset I think it should be said that truthfulness is learned much later than people generally suppose. I used to think it was one of the first things to be taught ; nay, that untruthfulness was a wickedness which no child properly taught by parents not believing in original sin would be guilty of. So when my first child, soon after he had learned to talk, told me an untruth, I cried very bitterly. Truthfulness *is* one of the *first* lessons to be taught, only we must not expect too much. A great deal of what is too apt to be taken for untruthfulness in a child is mere play of imagination, a sort of ideal-

izing and painting, which comes very early to some children. It is the duty and responsibility of *accuracy* which must be taught; and a great deal may be done in this way whilst the lad is a mere child. "Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "if your boy tells you that he looked out of that window when he looked out of the other, whip him!" We may differ with the doctor, perhaps, as to the way of punishing the boy, but there is no doubt that inaccuracy should not be overlooked in a child. We are constantly seeing such shocking examples of untruthfulness and exaggeration, both in private gossip and in the newspapers, that one cannot help wondering whether, if the good doctor's plan had been put into practice all round, society might not be blessed with more truthful members. One cannot too soon teach a child to use its conscience in these matters. If the mother will only train her boy early in this matter of accuracy, the larger influences to truth and honesty will follow naturally enough.

Then, as the third matter, I would place *Unselfishness*. This is a quality especially to be taught to *boys*. A feeling seems to grow up about a lad that he is the powerful one in life, has got to do the hard work, and so must be excused a good deal and more indulged, and let off a good deal from small service. I think there is nothing the child learns sooner than selfishness, and often

mothers help their children to be selfish. Thus, very unselfish mothers often have the most selfish boys. And here I wish to say very earnestly, if you want your boy to grow up without overmuch *thinking* of himself, do not let him *talk* much about himself, and do not talk about him to others when he is present. Parents are far too careless about this. Do not let your children see your callers so much as is the custom, nor bring them forward purposely to be seen and spoken to. Before a child can understand your words, he can tell that you are drawing attention to himself; then it is not long before every word you speak about him is understood. So he finds out that he is a person of some importance, and very soon he gets to feel that it is only right and proper that he should be talked about and considered. Thus your first seeds of selfishness are sown in him! Again, remember that some children are naturally more generous than others; they do not show any propensity for hoarding or possessing things, to have them "for their very, very own," and they willingly part with them. A mother is apt to call this "generosity," and plumes herself upon the idea that her child is unselfish. But there is all the difference in the world between this sort of generosity and real unselfishness. Your "generous boy" gives *one* apple when he has *two*; or a toy he does not want, when he knows he has

another new and handsome one in sight. This is not unnatural or to be censured, but don't allow yourself or him to imagine that he has done an *unselfish* thing, and don't praise him for it; let it pass with as little notice as possible. Such generosity is often only a form of self-gratification. Thus I heard one of your easy-going, generous men, one of the most ready at off-hand giving, talking to a friend about the hard times and the need for economizing; "But," said he, "men don't like to give up anything as long as they can get it; and, by jingo, *I'll* have all *I* want!" The truer spirit is that of the poor little girl, who, in like hard times during the Lancashire cotton famine, was seen one wintry day barely clad, but happy in the possession of an old shawl, which she offered to share with her little companion, saying, "Come under, *I can stretch it a bit!*" The true test of unselfishness for all, is not what we give, but what we *give up*.

Fourthly, I would place *Patriotism*. A mother can do much to train her boy to be a good citizen. How can a boy have an inborn love of his country, if his father and mother show no interest and no enthusiasm about its history, and its laws, and its good government? I think that if the mother has it in her heart to make her boy some day faithfully do his part for his city or his country, she will begin in good time, teaching him all she can

about it ; making him love and respect the names of its best public men who have served it well in times past ; taking an interest herself, and teaching him to take interest, in the events of the day. What better way of carrying out the lessons of unselfishness in the home to unselfishness applied to patriotism? We read of older times when mothers inspired their sons, even when quite little boys, with the ambition to save their country from its foes ; the boy longing for the time when he should be able to bear arms with his elders. Has our country no longer need of young men fired with as holy a zeal for her welfare, even though it has to be shown in more commonplace ways? Shall mothers no longer be ambitious that their sons when they grow up shall manfully put their hands to the work that is still to be done by true, honest, and fearless citizens? If some of the women who write and lecture, pleading for woman's suffrage, would only spend the same time in teaching their sons the duties and responsibilities of citizens, and their daughters by precept and example to do the same for the next generation of boys, it would not be long before our cities were better places than they are ; even in political matters, the earliest influence is the strongest ! I met the other day with an earnest, high-principled Republican. I found he was one of a family of eight sons ; his father had been a Democrat, his

mother a Republican. I asked with curiosity how many of the sons grew up Democrats. *Only one out of the eight!* Children begin very early indeed to take party sides. As soon as they do *that*, they can be trained to look at the matter from a higher standard. Of course they will at first be likely to feel that the side their parents take is the right one, but do all you can to help them to look from the point of principle and not of party. Here the father's help will come in, in teaching and interesting them, and simplifying to them what is interesting him in city politics or the affairs of the world, and explaining this new scheme and that new enterprise or expedition. I have seen a father bring out a surprising store of geographical and historical knowledge when sitting, on a Sunday afternoon, with a good illustrated weekly paper, and two or three little lads hanging on the arm of his chair and on his knee. Now it was the launching of some great ship, now some wonderful new piece of machinery that was illustrated. Now it was some hunting scene in India, or an incident in a war going on in Europe, or the history of the changes in governments and exchanges of territory. This father was not a professional man, had not the slightest pretensions to being a great reader; but he brought out and simplified to his boys the newspaper reading of the day's events all over the world, and such knowledge of

its past history as came within his own **memory**. He did not attempt to go far back into the **past**, but forty or fifty years even of his knowledge was very ancient and very useful history for his little boys. All this was an education in itself, — an education in unselfish interest in the life of peoples and countries, and altogether in the life and work of others. I have not seen this family of little boys since they became young men; but I feel pretty certain that when I do come across them, I shall find them working for their city and never shirking public duty, some of them perhaps, in time, members of parliament or magistrates, and this not for the sake of office or pay.

Important, however, as all these qualities I have spoken of are, I cannot regard a mother as having fulfilled her part unless she has done something to bring out that which is the crowning element in character, — I mean *Religion*.

Here again we have to go back, as in self-control, to that idea that she herself must *guide* at first, and so gradually develop in the child the power of *self-guidance*. At first the child cannot conceive of any power or care greater than its parents'. He does not see the necessity of asking for the care of a Heavenly Father.

It is not dependence that is first taught, but wonder and reverence. This is the most natural order of development. The child-mind seems

peculiarly fitted to receive and enjoy impressions of wonder and reverence. Without set lessons or taxing the memory, gradually the mind is led on from the wonder and beauty in Nature, in the stars and flowers and insects, in sunshine and storms, — on to something greater than these, to something greater and more powerful than father or mother, some being on whom *they* in turn depend. There is something in the very nature of children that readily receives the belief in a very real relation between a Supreme Being and themselves, long before they can have any set instruction from the Bible. The religious nature, which I believe to be as natural as any other element of mind, may and should be developed at first *without Bible or Testament*. Afterwards all the helps from devout, religious, God-loving men and women in all ages, and even of all nations, will be recognized and valued. But the whole, to be firm and permanent, must be based upon an *inward, gradually developed* consciousness, which will be independent of creeds or doctrines or evidences, and which, if once it is naturally brought out, cannot be utterly swept away by the tempest of scepticism and unbelief by which it will at times be assailed. So much a mother owes to her child, so much I believe its nature demands and is adapted to receive. I should not like to close, however, without a word about teaching little

children to pray. I think it is a good thing for the mother to write a simple little prayer for her children to learn by heart ; not, however, as something to be kept rigidly to : the child should be encouraged himself to add something to it in his own way, on special occasions of thankfulness or trouble. And, especially with boys, I would do everything I could to help and encourage them to overcome their dislike to kneeling down before getting into bed when amongst strange boys or when away from home. I do not believe that boys are naturally less religious than girls, but I do think that they are more afraid of being laughed at ; and, more than all, they fear being thought soft or emotional, and they think it looks so if they say their prayers regularly as little boys and girls do at home. Teach them that this fear is a weakness in itself, and shows a lack of the highest courage that a man can wish for, — moral courage. In this, however, as in all other matters I have spoken of, I do not attempt to lay down any detailed rules, but only to show the spirit and direction of these early efforts, which rest so entirely upon the mother, and which really give the bias to the whole after-education.

In close connection with this religious teaching at home, is the matter of taking little children to church. I do not need to say anything about the Sunday-school, because children are generally

ready enough for that; but I do not think that any Sunday-school can take the place of the church, any more than the Sunday-school teacher can relieve the mother of her own responsibility for religious training at home. Every mother who believes in public worship, and feels the benefit of it herself, would like her boys to grow up good church-goers and church-supporters. If they are to do this, she must begin early to take them with her. I think from five years old children may begin to go occasionally as a treat; and by the time they are seven or eight, church-going should have come to be looked upon as one of the regular institutions of the family, — a matter of course as much as regularity at meals or bed-time. To form this regular church-going habit while children are young, requires great tact and patience, and a mother has to exercise her unselfishness as much here as elsewhere. She will not, perhaps, be able to keep her whole attention on the service, or feel the time so restful to herself as if the children were all left at home with a servant; but I never see a mother at church, Sunday after Sunday, without her children, without wondering rather sadly how they are spending the Sunday morning. There is not much trouble at first. Children love to do what they see their parents and all grown-up people do, and to be with them. For the first few times, the novelty and serious-

ness may awe them, and they will very likely behave very well; but as this wears off, and they feel more at home in the pew, they will be apt to grow restless and talkative. Watchfulness and tact, however, will do a great deal in keeping them quiet. Let the little one have a book, or a pencil and scrap of paper; this, with a good nap, will help along the sermon. Many a time I have listened to the sermon with a little child leaning up against me on each side. But even from the beginning there are some things the children can enter into. There is always the singing; and they like to look over the hymn with father or mother long before they can read, and gradually they find that they know some of the words. Later on, again, if they are encouraged to listen, they will startle you some Sunday by saying, as one of my little boys did, "Mother, I do believe I understood a little bit of the sermon to-day." Insist upon one thing only, — no talking, perfect silence and quietness; this one lesson in self-control will be as good as a sermon. As soon as a child knows that quietness has to be, it is wonderful how much it will find to interest both eyes and ears. Children are very quick observers: they will soon notice when parents and older people who are about them are reverent in their behavior. When they see that they join devoutly in prayer and hymn, they will have impressions

made upon them which they will carry with them all through their lives ; they will begin to have some realization of what is meant by religion, and by worshipping in “spirit and in truth.”

I cannot better close what I have to say than in the following wise words of John Locke : “The business of education, in respect of knowledge, is not to perfect a learner in all or any one of the sciences, but to give his mind that disposition and those habits that may enable him to attain any part of knowledge he shall stand in need of in the future course of his life.”

I have thought it might be helpful to some mothers if I should add two passages from Mrs. Barbauld’s “Hymns in Prose” which I have often read to children and found that they liked. Along with them I have ventured to put two very simple prayers, such as any mother might teach her children to say.

HANNAH HERFORD.

WHEN the darkness is passed away, and the beams of the morning sun strike through your eyelids, begin the day with praising God, who hath taken care of you through the night. Flowers, when you open again, spread your leaves, and smell sweet to His praise. Birds, when you awake, warble your thanks amongst the green boughs. Sing to Him before you sing to your mates. Let His praise be in our hearts when we lie down; let His praise be on our lips when we awake. — *Mrs. Barbauld.*

MORNING PRAYER FOR A CHILD.

Heavenly Father, I thank Thee for this new day. Now may I try to please Thee to-day. Help me to be obedient to my father and mother, and very kind to every one around me. Help me to speak the truth, and in everything to do my best. May I feel thankful to Thee for everything that makes me happy, and remember that Thy love and care are over all Thy children everywhere. AMEN.

As the mother moveth about the house with her finger on her lips, and stilleth every little noise, that her infant be not disturbed; as she draweth the curtains around its bed, and shutteth out the light from its eyes; so God draweth the curtains of darkness around us; so He maketh all things to be hushed and still, that His large family may sleep in peace. — *Mrs. Barbauld.*

EVENING PRAYER FOR A CHILD.

Heavenly Father, bless me, and take care of me this night, and give me quiet sleep. Forgive all that I have done wrong this day, and help me as I grow older to try more and more to please Thee. Bless my dear father and mother [and brothers and sisters]. May we be a happy family on earth, and at last a happy family in heaven. AMEN.

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OUR THOUGHT OF GOD

BY

REV. CHARLES F. DOLE, DD.

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OUR THOUGHT OF GOD.

Can we ever be sure of the fact of God? Can we be as sure, for example, as we are sure of the existence of our friend whom we see and talk with every day? The thinkers and the men of religion tell us that God is the central fact in the universe, that he is the only reality, without whom all else would vanish, that he is present everywhere. If the voices of religion are true, if God really is, we ought surely to be easily made aware of him!

Observe that there is no such difficulty as once hindered men from knowing God. Men once conceived of God as living at a distance and ruling the world by deputies. You might go to him when you died, you might see him in heaven; but you could not expect to see him here. You could only be sure of him, if at all, because you had been told about him. We do not say this any longer. If he is anywhere, he is here. If we can ever be sure of him in another life, we can be sure of him in this present life. If in any honest sense prayer or communion is real, it must be because each soul of us has direct access to the universal life. It is this or nothing. And all the greatest affirmations of religion assure us that it is precisely this.

What obstacle, then, prevents us from being as sure of God as we are sure of our nearest friend? Let us search for our innermost doubt. We cannot see God's face, we cannot touch his hand, we cannot hear his voice, as we see, touch, and hear in the case of our friend. Is this true? Recollect that we never see or touch or hear the soul of our friend.

That which thinks, wills, aspires, and loves, is beyond sight or sense. He, too, never quite sees us. Our senses are only so many avenues of approach to each other. Nevertheless, they suffice. We are perfectly sure of each other's thought and love and reality.

What we wish to suggest is that we do see, touch, and hear God as truly at least as we see, touch, and hear in the case of our friend. Our friend has a few familiar aspects of his face, a few motions of his body, a few tones of his voice. God has infinite aspects, motions, and voices. Our friend at times perplexes us with words, looks, deeds, which for the moment do not seem to accord with his character. Nevertheless, at his best, all apparent inconsistencies dissolve, and we love one another. In his unity, heart and soul and mind, he is our good friend. At our best, we see and know the perfect and full-grown man,—the soul of our friend.

It is just so in our knowledge of God. There are moments, there are aspects, there are motions, which perplex us. How should there not be in an infinite nature? Yet at our best, when we see clearest, when the great laws come into view, when the eternal motions are visible, when the voices of God speak their deeper message of harmony and unity, our souls rest in God as truly as ever the thoughts of ancient Psalmists rested in the Eternal. Have we not heard God in the forest or by the ocean or in the mighty inspired music of Bach or Beethoven or Brahms? Whom else did we hear? Have we not been in touch with God when our hands have clasped the hands of the faithful, the high-minded, the merciful, in a common bond of allegiance? Was it not allegiance to the Spirit of the universe, making itself felt in actual presence? Have we not seen God in skies and stars, in snow crystals and flowers, in the eyes of little children, and often in the smile of love which would give all for our sake? Where else, except out of the heart

of the universe, did this wonderful light of love gleam upon us? Yes! we are poor, if we have not many a time stood in the presence chamber of the Eternal. Do we not always stand there? Can we ever flee from his presence? Do we not then know — what the fact is — that we live in God's world, and, indeed, are his children?

You thus see that we may be at least as sure of God as we are of our nearest friends. We are indeed assured of the presence and reality of God in the same way as we are made aware of any personality. Through the display of power, through the sight of endless worlds traversed by Law and bound together into Unity, through scenes of matchless order and beauty, through marvellous harmonies of music, through the light of friendly Love, shining upon us, we are daily made aware of God, the ever-present Spirit of the Universe. What are all these mighty and beautiful manifestations, except his messages to us? How better could he speak to us?

GOD WITHIN US.

BY REV. CHARLES F. DOLE.

Tennyson in lines often quoted says :—

“Speak to Him thou, for he hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet —
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.”

This is not merely a fine poetic fancy. We know nothing, if this is not so. Let us question our consciousness, and discover what it answers to our examination. What are we? What subtle mysteries do we find wrapped up in ourselves? We find, first, the mystery of force or power. I lift an arm, or I run. What makes the motion? The certainty is that I do not make it myself. I only use it. I turn on or release force, I share in the force of the world. I no more create it in my own body than I create it, as it drives the wheels of a mill.

I find in myself the mystery of life. When did it begin? Whence did it proceed? Through its mysterious breath, I live; but I am only its creature. Did the primeval atoms of matter combine to produce this miracle of life? What endowed these atoms, then, with this divine power of creation? What are the invisible atoms, that they should agree to unite and build me? The atoms are many. Life is one, as force is. Life rules and orders the atoms. I share life as I share power.

I think, I am conscious, my senses tell me their message; and I understand, I enjoy order and beauty, I put thoughts together. I rise from the sight of the parts to the idea of

the whole. What makes this marvel of thought? I do not make it. It seems to play through my mind, as life plays through my body. Never are my thoughts my own. I only think as I am told. At my best and clearest, it is as if some one were dictating to me, and I were answering back, "Yes, I understand it is so." The clearness of my thought varies, as the tide of health or life, physical, intellectual, and moral, rises and falls.

It is given to me to perceive the issues of right and wrong. An urgency of duty or conscience presses upon me, compelling me often to go counter to every animal instinct within me. This is no force of my own. I did not create it. It is something like life which I share. As Matthew Arnold has said, it is "a Power not ourselves making for righteousness." But I am as sure of this inner Power as I am sure of my own existence. It is in other men as it is in me. It is universal.

• Love wakens in our hearts. It lifts us with our childishness, our petty prides and conceits, our stupid selfishness, as the ocean lifts the great ships. It is of one nature in all of us. Did any one of us create his love? No more than we created the breath of life or set the blood coursing in our veins. It is a primal mystery. Yet nothing is so real. Take love away, and we should cease to be men. We should not even be animals, were it not for this universal life-force throbbing in us, and breaking all bonds, to give, to serve, to pour itself out.

Once more, we find in ourselves what we call will. It is in us not merely to hunger and thirst, to feel, to think, to desire, and to love, but to stoutly resolve to dare, and to do. We call will the central fact of personality. In the act of will, power, thought, conscience, love, life, all march together as one. We are constituted as persons in our acts of will. With a single proviso: Our will must be good will.

Is it ever an ill-will or a selfish will? Then it is as if the train moved off the track, or the ship went, with dismantled yards, to wreck. Only good will holds us in the sure, safe lines of real personality. Good will alone unifies our lives, and gives them rest and joy.

Whence now comes this splendid element of will, through which at our best we share the forces of the universe and are admitted into its secrets, which, even at our worst, still communicates power and motion for a little while to the derailed wheels of the car of our life? Did one of us ever create his own will,—least of all his good will? It is like force and thought and life and love. Will is likewise in us, playing through us, making us what we are. We share and use and enjoy it, but it is in fact a universe force. The law of its coming is to use it, and pour it through us. The law of its going is like the law of life, to cease to employ it.

Why do we speak any longer of force, thought, life, love, will, as if they were abstract and impersonal? These great words — mysteries though they are — describe reality and belong to persons. It is hardly tenable that force could be, except as a person put it forth. It is not tenable that life, even in an amœba or a seed, could be, except as a person manifested himself through the tiny form of life. But it is incredible that there should be thought or justice or love or will, except as we mean a thinking, righteous, loving and willing person.

These terms have no significance in the abstract. My thought is I thinking, my justice is I owning moral obligation, my love is I loving some one, my will is I resolving to express my love.

See now how we have been talking of God at every point. The power, the life, the thought, the justice, the love, the will, within me, are so many names of God, the one and only complete Person in the universe. I use power, I per-

ceive and know, I feel the pressure of conscience, I love, and I determine to do what love bids. Every throb, every motion, every thought, every aspiration, every impulse of sympathy, every righteous act, is God, acting, urging, whispering, and living within me. What else is it? How otherwise can I explain myself? How could I possibly be a person, albeit imperfect and still in the process of making unless the real and infinite Person informed and inspired me? How could man's tiny dynamo act, or his little instrument spell out its messages, except for the unlimited ocean of power sweeping through his coils and charging his wires? So, surely, all is of God.

True! All of God is not here or there, at least to our finite perception; sometimes the display of power only, sometimes his beauty, but not also his love; sometimes lessons of thought, but not yet the voice of his goodness. The human medium cannot contain all of him. The feeble wire, poorly connected, only partially carries the flood of the divine forces. Nevertheless, at our highest, when we are most truly men,—that is, persons also like God,—in other words, his children,—when the tide of his mighty life rises to its fullness in mind and soul, when we gladly think his thoughts after him, when we go freely with his motions of conscience, when we love with all our hearts and our wills, and are one with his good will. then we know by innermost testimony, and no longer at second hand, what the unknown Greek poet long ago saw,—that literally “in him we live and move and have our being.” We know what the most spiritual of the New Testament writers said,—“God is Love”; and “every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God”

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[No. 182]

WHAT IF WE BELIEVE IN GOD?

BY

REV. CHARLES F. DOLE

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

WHAT IF WE BELIEVE IN GOD?

Perhaps you think that it makes little practical difference what we think about God, or even if we do not believe in God at all. True, if our idea of God is of some absent Being, of whose existence we only can know at second hand. In this case real life is not to be looked for here in this world. But suppose for a moment what all the great teachers in religion have always confidently alleged, and what is now everywhere coming into our modern religious consciousness,—namely, that God is here and now,—realize then that all our lesser lives arise in him, and are essentially spirit; that is, Power, Thought, Will, and Love, as God's life is. Conceive what must now be true, that the life of each one of us is rich or poor, abundant or meagre, in proportion as the life of God flows in us freely or not, and see what such an idea begins to do for us.

In the first place the deepest instinct in us is to desire life. Life is power, satisfaction, and joy.

“ 'Tis life of which our nerves are scant,
More life, and fuller, that we want.

Show us the secret of life, and we will be content, But, as surely as God is here, the secret of life is perfectly plain. It is to let him do his good will with us, body and soul. It is to obey, first, his physical laws, and to yield our bodies to the flow of his health in us. His life forces seek to have free circulation within us. Give them their rhythmic motion. The

deep, full, fearless, restful breathing is a sign and token of our obedience to this law.

The secret of life, next, is to dismiss pride, conceit, prejudice, and to give our minds to the complete possession of truth. Every truth is God's voice or word within us. What do we want except the truth? How should we ever fear it as hurtful? Let it do what it will with us. Give it room, give it utterance and expression, speak it, embody it. Its law is, the more you receive, the more you express it, the more your mind enlarges toward it. See! truth is God's life. At every instant when we see truth, we see God, we hear God. Do you think it makes no practical difference with us whether or not we catch this sublime conception? Say rather that, as often as this idea comes, with one splendid rush of intellectual health it sweeps away every vestige of bigotry and egotism.

Again, Divine Goodness seeks to have its will with us. The tidal force of righteousness seeks to pour through us. This force is God. When conscience urges, this is the life of God, closer to us than the air which we breathe. Do you think it makes no difference whether or not we believe this majestic fact? When we thus believe, we cannot resist the beautiful motion. We do not dare, we have no wish to disobey. Our one prayer is now to do justice, and never to cease to do justice. To do justice is to be alive with the life of the universe. To do wrong is to shut life out of our doors.

The innermost secret of life is to love. We have said that God is love. Is it conceivable that it makes no practical difference whether or not we believe this? When we do not believe it, we are not half alive. When we see this, it is as if the universe were behind, lifting us. It is as if an infinite Friend were at our side and holding our hands. We give ourselves to the motion of the sublime good will; and we are in that instant alive,—complete men, sons of God. Did

any one ever try this, and find it to fail? Ask yourselves at what times you have most completely lived, at what times you have best known peace, gladness, and the fulfilment of your being. Were not these the times when Good-will, or Love, had free course in you, and you only did what God bade you do? Here is the magic key to the understanding of all human acts. Do you imagine it is not the most practical fact whether or not you possess the wonderful key? Here is the secret of Jesus. It is the secret of all the noble and true-hearted. How else do you explain their lives? Suppose you took their secret: do you think it would make no practical difference with your life? I say it would make what Dante called the New Life.

Thus at every point we discover that the finite human life depends upon the actual and present God. Bind the body, impede the circulation, sit down in idleness and let the blood stagnate, and the physical life runs low and death threatens. Shut off the mind from the sight of truth, fill it with its own conceits, close it from the free sunshine, and, lo! there is no intellectual health in us. Cease to listen to conscience, throw the tiny life off the trolley of duty, isolate yourself, seek your small personal will, and all the life in you drains down to that of the beast. It is hell when no fresh currents of good-will invigorate the soul of man. God's life is that which quickens the nerves of the body. His life is that which constitutes thought: this life, welcomed within us, fills our souls with joy as of heaven. Shall we not, then, believe the most beautiful fact, the innermost law of our being? Shall we not, then, joyously do what the good law commands? Shall we not open our hearts to the inflow of the loving Life of the universe?

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GOD LOVES ALL SOULS.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

“All souls are mine.” Blessed declaration of the God-inspired Ezekiel! All souls,—of the great and the humble, the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, the king and the slave, the pure child and the abandoned woman, the soul of the apostle John and the soul of Judas Iscariot,—all belong to God. He will take care of what is his. He will leave no child orphaned. Those who are trodden down and forsaken in this world,—he watches their sorrowful lives, and will cause them to bring forth fruit at last. Thus does God love all souls with a universal, unwearied, unfailing affection. Thus did Christ love all souls, gathering around him the publicans, Pharisees, and sinners, the pious and the profane. And thus, if we are Christians, we shall love all souls, calling no man common or unclean, believing in the brotherhood of the race, finding something good in every one,—a vital seed of nobleness in the most deadened bosom; and, in thus loving other souls, our own souls will be blessed. While we forget ourselves, God will remember us. While we seek to save others, we, too, shall be safe.

We may throw ourselves away; but God will not throw us away. We belong to him still; and he “gathereth up the fragments which remain, that nothing be lost.” In order to become pure, we may need sharp suffering; and then God will not hesitate to inflict it. In the other life, as in this, he

will chasten us, not for his pleasure, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. It is thus that God's love for the soul, and its worth, appear eminently, in that he will not let us destroy ourselves. When we pass into the other world, those who are ready, and have on the wedding-garment, will go in to the supper. They will find themselves in a state of being where the faculties of the body are exalted and spiritualized, and the powers of the soul are heightened; where a higher truth, a nobler beauty, a larger love, feed the immortal faculties with a divine nourishment; where our imperfect knowledge will be swallowed up in larger insight; and communion with great souls, in an atmosphere of love, shall quicken us for endless progress. Then faith, hope, and love will abide,—faith leading to sight, hope urging to progress, and love enabling us to work with Christ for the redemption of the race.

Let us rejoice, friends, in these great hopes. Let us praise God for his creating, educating, and saving love. Let us rejoice that the lost souls—lost to earth, lost to virtue, lost to human uses here—are not lost to God; that he still holds them in his hand. Let us rejoice that those who will not be led to him by blessings and joy shall be led to him by anguish, pain, and suffering. Let us rejoice that the glory of heaven and the fires of hell shall both serve God,—both work together for good.

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WE NEED TO KNOW GOD

BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

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25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

WE NEED TO KNOW GOD.

We can spare anything else better than our faith in God. To live without God in the world is to live without hope in the world.

Not less, but more, of religion is what we need. To see God only as power may lead to a religion of superstition. To see him only as law may despoil our life of warmth and glow. To see the divine life only in the beauty of nature and art may end in a sentimental religion, lacking moral force. To see God only in the law of duty may result in a hard, technical, and merely moral religion. To see him only in the soul may end in a mystical religion. To see him only in Christ tends to a narrow, intolerant, and formal religion.

And, therefore, we need to go forward, not backward, into a larger sea of thought, love, and life. We need to find God as the fulness, filling all in all. Let us see him in science, in universal law, giving vitality to all our knowledge, and making nature more divinely fair. Let us see him in all the duties of our daily life, glorifying their humblest details with the warmth of devotion and the tenderness of a father's love. Let us see him in the depths of our own soul; in the mysteries of our being, a light shining in the darkness, illuminating our reason with a reason more divine.

Man is not himself when away from God. Man needs for growth and development, for the full action of his powers, the sense of the divine presence and the divine love. The man who has no faith in God is only half a man. Half of his nature, and that the higher half, is passive and dormant.

He is away from his true home, a poor wanderer in a foreign land.

In the irreligious man the higher nature is asleep or dead. The conscience is stupefied, the reason sophisticated, faith enslaved to superstitious beliefs. The love of truth is often perverted into the love of error, fault-finding, captious criticism, perpetual denial. When he becomes a religious man, what takes place? He says, "I will arise and go to my Father." He has come to believe that he has a Father and a Friend to whom he can go, on whom he can rely, in whom he may trust.

Draw near, then, in faith, to this great, overflowing fountain of heavenly compassion. God has put into our hearts his spirit, to enable us all to say "Our Father!" Let nothing separate us from his love,—neither life nor death, nor our own folly and sin, our own weakness and ignorance, our own doubt or unbelief. Let us not be troubled by harsh doctrines. God asks for none of these things at our hands. Sacrifice and offering he does not require,—not the sacrifice of our own reason before unintelligible mysteries. He says only this, "My son, give me thy heart!" And, to enable us to do so, he shows his own love to every soul that he has made,—shows how he leaves the ninety-and-nine sheep, and goes into the wilderness after the one that is lost; how he so loved the world as to give the only one who had risen to the height of perfect sonship — his only Son — to bring the same sense of a Father's love to the rest of his children. He allowed this dearest child to die in torture and shame, that we, by that solemn sacrifice, might be lifted out of darkness into marvellous light. So now we can behold in all his gifts this unspeakable gift of a fatherly love. Now every outward blessing has in it a touch of divine tenderness. Now we see in the universe not only beauty and wonder, power, order, law, but, interfused with and penetrating all things,—that

highest of all,— a divine love. Hold fast to it: let it not go, for it is your life! To trust in the Father's love is the gospel within the gospel: it is the inmost secret of Christ; it is the way, the truth, and the life.

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STILLING THE TEMPEST

BY

REV. JULIAN C. JAYNES



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25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

STILLING THE TEMPEST.

The incarnations of the Almighty are everywhere and in everything!

That is the revelation for us to-day. Not an incarnation here and there, not some lone individual aflame with divinity standing on the mountain top, and all the multitude below like so many clods of the earth, but the whole wide world a living, palpitating manifestation of the divine life. I do not mean that all are equally endowed. I do not mean that one man is as full of divinity as any other man. There are great waves and small waves on the surface of the sea; but they all rise up out of the same vast deep, and they all flash back the sunlight of the heavens above. And so, however much men may vary, they are all, according to their capacity, instruments of the divine will and bearers of the divine light.

Now let us carry this thought of the incarnation a little farther. Let us see how the power of God in man is beautifying the earth and conquering sin and transfiguring human character. I turn to the life of Jesus to tell the story for me,—not because he stands apart from creation, not because the quality of his divinity was any different from yours or mine, but because of all the children of men he was one of the ripest, fullest expressions of God. I turn to that simple account of his stilling the tempest on the Sea of Galilee.

The Master was asleep in the boat, and the disciples were quietly tending the oars and the sail, when all at once the storm-cloud beat down upon them and wrapped them in

darkness and a fury of angry waters and tongues of flame. Waking amid all that confusion of frightened men and roaring elements, he stretches forth his hand, and at the word of command the sunlight breaks, the thunder ceases, and a peaceful silence settles upon the troubled sea. It is a beautiful and suggestive story. Do not ask me if I believe it. I hope we have grown beyond the need of asking a question like that. I am glad I do not have to believe it. Make it a fact, and it sinks into a piece of divine magic. Make it the child of the loving imagination of his disciples, and then it becomes full of beauty and symbolical meaning. It then tells us of God incarnate in man come to rule the material forces of the earth. It then symbolizes to us the divinity of the human soul mastering the storm-cloud and quelling the fury of the great deep. Just see how true it is as a type of what man can do under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit. Look how he has conquered the savagery of nature and glorified the face of the earth. Once it was a rude and tangled wilderness. Once its treasures were unknown, its forces unused, its marvels and beauties feared instead of loved and appreciated. And then the divine spark flamed up in the human soul, and the wondrous change began. The son of God went forth to do his Father's will. He spoke to the valley, and it brought him bread. He spoke to the mountain, and it brought coal and iron and silver and gold. He dreamed a dream, and on the morrow his splendid cities were glowing in the sunlight.

He sailed his ships into the eye of the storm. He harnessed the rivers to the wheels of his mill. He stretched his industries, like golden chains, across the world. He caught the lightning, and sent it to whisper his message beneath the sea. He imprisons the invisible steam behind his iron pistons, and it becomes his faithful servant. He must give his thought to the world; and, lo! the marvel of

the printed page comes forth. He must tell the music of his soul, and instruments without number appear at his creative touch. He must fix the vision of beauty that he sees, and the glowing canvas carries that vision to a million eyes besides his own. He takes all of these rude elements of the earth, all of these fierce, untamed forces of sea and sky and land, and compels them to do what God has whispered in his soul. It is the revelation of God to man. It is the revelation of man to God. Go watch some great Atlantic liner, under the guidance of a single hand, swinging away from her dock and making for the open sea. Go stand before the jewelled façade of St. Mark's in Venice. Go into the galleries of the Old World, where Art has told her story. Go into yonder great library, where lie embalmed the thought and prophecy of human genius. Go stand for one evening hour on that mighty bridge of New York, swung hundreds of feet in the air,—a world of flashing lights as far as the eye can reach, and all repeated in the reflections of the swirling tide below,—and you will understand what the incarnation means. Out of the depths of your soul you will cry: "How wonderful is man! Thou hast made him only a little lower than the angels." And then, as you look up at the great vaulted sky, set with the eternal stars, you shall hear a voice saying: "This is my son in whom I am well pleased. I set the thought burning in his brain. I kindled the fire of aspiration in his soul. He has not been disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

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THE TEMPTATION.

BY REV. JULIAN C. JAYNES.

The great temptation! What a picture it is! The wide, bleak desert, and this sad, untried young man, worn out with fasting and inward strife, waiting there for the crucial trial of his life. And then the gates of hell open, and Satan comes forth to battle with the Son of God. He first appeals to his physical necessities, and tempts him with the creature comforts of life. Then he tries him on the side of his self-trust. Then, once more, he turns his attack on his ambition, and says, "All the kingdoms of the world are yours, if you will only fall down and worship me." And now hear the strong, indignant answer to all this: "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." There is the picture of human temptation, of human struggle, of human victory. It is again only a symbol of what is going on everywhere in the world,—not this time the conquest of material things, but the conquest of the spiritual powers of evil that lurk in human life. It is God the Father empowering his child to withstand the things that enfeeble and debase him. It is the incarnation of divine resistance against the forces of sin.

I do not pause to discuss the nature of evil or to explain whence it came. It is enough for us to know that it is here, so strong, so alluring, so omnipresent, that I do not wonder that tempted and tried humanity has believed in a prince of darkness who delights in the overthrow of purity and goodness and virtue. It is everywhere, tempting us in our appetites and passions, tempting us in our desires and ambitions, tempting us even on the highest level of thought and feeling.

It is always laying hold of our garments, trying to drag us back into the lower ranges of life. And what, pray, would our poor, besieged humanity do if there were no communication between God and men? What would the wandering child do without a sense of its Father's presence? What, but to be hopelessly lost. What, but to sink back into moral stupor, without strength, without vision, without ideals.

It is because God has incarnated himself in man that man is able to see the right and struggle toward it. It is because the divine resistance is in our hearts that we are able to smite the evil one. To us all this power is given. You know it is there. You have felt its uplift in many a trial. You have heard its voice again and again when you were tempted, when you were in despair, when you were ready to throw down the standard and desert the field. You have heard its voice shaming your cowardice and bidding you rise up and hold yourself pure or patient or brave or strong. That is what the Divine Spirit has been doing with all men in all time.

I cannot think of the incarnation without thinking of its moral lift in the history of the race,—how it has drawn men step by step away from brutality and sensual things; how it has led them little by little into the ways of the spirit; how it has taught them century by century to subdue selfishness, to break the chains of passion, to slay the devils of cruelty and avarice; how it has, more and more, as the years have gone on, multiplied the company of saints and heroes and noble, unsullied lives, until their name is legion and their number as the sands of the sea.

That was a wondrous victory,—the victory of man over the physical strength of the earth. But a grander victory still is this age-long conquest of the spirit of selfishness by the spirit of God in man.

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THE TRANSFIGURATION

BY

REV. JULIAN C. JAYNES

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25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

You hear God in the tempest, but you may hear him also in the whisperings of the evening breeze. You see him in the purple and gold of the sunset, but you see him also in the tiny ray that streams through your window lattice. You behold him incarnated in Buddha, changing a prince's robe for a beggar's rags; in Socrates, bestowing jewels of wisdom upon ungrateful Athens; in Jesus, with peaceful brow and forgiving lips, dying for truth amid the Jewish rabble. But you also see him incarnated in the face of the little child at your knee, in the simple beauty of humble, earnest lives, in the forms of men and women everywhere who are walking the earth on missions of love and usefulness.

The incarnation of God in great and small, in high and low,—that is the condition of his existence for us to-day. For let me ask: How else could God tell himself to the world? How else could you hear his voice and see his face? You might write his attributes all over the sky; and yet, if you could not see them personified in human life, they would mean nothing to you. You might reason out his existence by the processes of philosophy; and yet, if you could not meet him in flesh and blood, that existence would be a cold and empty form of thought.

God himself would be helpless without this universal incarnation. "It is only through personality that personality can be revealed." It is only to character that character can be told. Luther said that "God was omnipotent, but that he needed men and women to help him." That is forever true. Make God all power and love and justice and beauty,

and yet, if there were no continuous incarnation, his ministrations to the world would cease. He could not speak or act or do his work in human life unless there were human hearts and minds and human hands and feet to do his will.

Let us study the transfiguration from this point of view. You know the story,—how Jesus took Peter and James and John, and climbed up the mountain side to pray, and, as they waited there in the silence, behold, a light shone round about them and they saw the face of the Master as the face of an angel. You have seen it all pictured by the magic brush of Raphael,—the mountain top, the mysterious light, the worshipping disciples, and the attendant spirits of the prophets, the beatific figure of the Christ, and down below the upturned faces of a multitude of sick and suffering humanity. Those upturned faces, I think, are the key to the secret of the whole scene. It is the meeting of love and sorrow, of compassion and misery; and by it love is transfigured and sorrow turned into joy. It was the love of Jesus going out to his crippled brethren that glorified him as it passed. It was the divine pity of God shining through him down into the troubled heart of the world that made the face of Jesus as the face of an angel in the eyes of his disciples. That, to me, is the explanation of the Transfiguration; and I need no other. For I see it every day. I see men and women all around me who are being transfigured by the love and benevolence shining out of their hearts. You see it also,—nay, you have been transfigured yourselves. You have done some kindness or lifted some burden or touched some wound of life with healing hand, and you have come back with a stronger sense of joy and tenderness in your heart. That was the transfiguration of an hour. You have undergone some long temptation or borne some heart-breaking sorrow; and you have come out of it all victorious, only to become more pitiful toward others and more anxious

to give the hand of help. That was the transfiguration of the whole life.

And so it is everywhere. The world is all aglow with the light of blessed, helpful lives. We see them in our homes, in our streets, in all the ways of life. All who are easing the pain of other hearts, all who are leading wandering feet back into paths of safety, all who are trying to mend the fragments of some shattered soul, all who are lovingly, humbly trying to bring joy and peace to men,—all are standing on the mount of transfiguration,—though they know it not,—and round them shines the heavenly light, and from their faces beams the love of God. This is the highest of all. This is the climax of the process of incarnation here on the earth, the transformation of the human into the divine, the transfiguration of man with the glory of the spirit. So it runs through all the history of humanity,—first the struggle with the earth, then the struggle with the animal instincts, then the struggle to bring in the kingdom of heaven. So it runs through the life of the individual man,—first the conquest of physical forces, then the conquest of the demons of self, and then the victorious life going back to win the cause of those who have fought and been defeated.

This is the story of God's gift of himself to the world. This is the gospel of the incarnation,—God working through human minds and hearts to reveal his love and to bring heaven upon the earth. It is no new gospel. It tells you what you know already, that you are the children of the Most High, that you bear in your hearts the impress of his spirit, that you are the temples of the Holy One. And out of that solemn, awful truth let there rise the strong resolve that, since God is in you, you will make yourselves a fit dwelling-place for all God-like things.

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WHAT IS HEAVEN?

BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

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WHAT IS HEAVEN?

When we seek to know what heaven is to be in the next world, we must ask what it is here. For, certainly, the kingdom of heaven comes also in this world. There are hours of heavenly peace in this life: we sit sometimes in heavenly places with Jesus even now. Heaven is the peace of God which passeth understanding.

This heaven below comes from the three elements which are to abide,—faith, hope, and love. Faith means the sight of the invisible reality which is below the passing appearance. It is the evidence of the reality of truth, goodness, wisdom. We endeavor to know, because we believe there is really something to be known. Faith, therefore, is the condition of knowledge. And what a joy and peace come to the soul from knowledge! Knowledge of the laws of the universe, knowledge of the divine work in history, knowledge of our capacity of improvement, knowledge of Christ as a personal friend and benefactor!

Knowledge abides in the other world because faith abides,—faith which is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Here we see as in a glass darkly, there face to face. We may there learn to understand the nature of life, the nature of the soul, the enigma of moral freedom, the cause and reason of the existence of evil, all which are hidden from us here. But, as knowledge enlarges, faith will extend itself further, and root itself more deeply in the soul. Far beyond what we know will be our trust in the unknown abysses of divine being.

And hope also will continue in the other life; and this means that there will be progress hereafter as well as here. To hope means to look forward to something better; but, unless that something better can be reached, the hope must perish. Therefore, continued hope implies continued progress. It means constant growth and development. It means ever-increasing knowledge, activity, power; ever-increasing capacity for spiritual improvement; a never-ceasing ascent toward God,—powers growing more angelic, activity becoming more divine.

And we may say as the surest of all certainties that love will abide,—love of those who are above us in grandeur and beauty; love for those who are beside us in sympathy and fellowship; love toward those who are most helpless and needy, the souls which sit furthest down in darkness and the shadow of death.

Love here is one of the best things we have; but love here is only in its rudiments. What may it not become in the other world, when we shall be lifted into communion with the wise, the good, the noble, the beautiful, who have gone up and on; when we shall be surrounded by their sympathy, blessed by their friendship; when Christ shall come to find us with the angels and archangels; and when we, in our mansion, in our sphere, shall be able to work with them in theirs for the advancement and redemption of the universe.

The wonderful description of charity by the apostle Paul is not rhapsody or declamation; nor is it the account of an ideal, super-angelic state, impossible for us here, but to be reached in some heavenly world. This divine power of love is possible for us all. Only let the love of God and man enter the soul, and you have in you the elements here described. You will find it not difficult to “suffer long and be kind.” It will seem a simple thing not to envy, not to boast, not to behave unseemly, not to be always seeking your own.

Whereas before you were easily provoked, now you smile at provocation, and are unruffled by injury. You become able to "bear all things," to "believe all things," to hope for all good in the midst of evil, and to "endure all things" to the end, patient because sure that the Lord reigns.

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[No. 189]

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APR 1 2 1917

HOW TO GET ETERNAL LIFE

BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

HOW TO GET ETERNAL LIFE.

The problem of human existence may be stated thus: How can we change time into life? In some men the mental, moral, and spiritual life and energy continues to increase so long as they remain in this world. While the body is growing old, mind and heart remain young. While the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day.

Time cannot be detained; but, while it is passing, we may be able to change it into something which will last always,—that is, immortal or undying life, or what the Scriptures call eternal life. For immortal life, eternal life, means that kind of life which does not decay and change,—not future existence, but present fulness of being. Bodily life decays with years; but all of immortal life we have within us will last unchanged, never growing old, never wearing out. Our business is to change the bodily existence, measured by time, into spiritual existence belonging to eternity.

God is in nature; and so the man who loves and studies nature receives life from that study.

But God is also present in man. Those who are interested in their fellow-beings, who are laboring for the progress of humanity, seeking to save the lost, advocating reforms, helping their neighbors,—they also become full of life. They are in communion with God, and drinking at the great source of eternal life.

The years, as they pass on, are changed into life, partly by God's providence and without any effort of ours. It is

done by a law of our nature. God has so made us that, while we grow old in one way, we grow young in another way; while we are becoming more weak in body, we grow more strong in spirit. That is the natural tendency of things, if we do not oppose it by our own wilfulness. If we accept patiently and trustingly what comes to us from God, there comes with it an inward strength and peace. What we have to add on our part is trust, submission, fidelity. Let us be loyal to our work, whatever it is. Whatever our hand finds to do, let us do it with our might. Let us forget the things behind,—disappointment, sorrow, the unkindness of others, remorse over ourselves. Leave them behind, and reach out to things before, to deeper knowledge, larger usefulness, purer love. And so, while the outward man perishes, the inward man will be renewed day by day.

One of the most convincing arguments for immortality is the undying appetite of the soul for knowledge, love, progress. As we approach the term of life, it never occurs to us that it is time to fold our arms, close our eyes, and bid farewell to nature, poetry, art, friendship, business. As long as our faculties permit, we take exactly the same interest in life as if we were to live fifty years longer.

I think that, if we have a sincere desire to know and to serve God, the years change our religion into life. We cease to harass ourselves or others much about mere questions of dogma or sect. A very few central truths satisfy us. Trust in God, love to man, are enough. Our prayers cease to be formal, and become a habit of the soul,—waiting on God, looking to him for strength, dwelling in his infinite peace. Our faith in Christ turns to love. What to us are questions about his nature, whether supernatural or not, about his transcendental or primeval being? We know that our joys and our sorrows touch his heart; that, when we wrong man, we wrong him; when we help man, we help him. We all,

in our different phrases, still look to him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We learn to see in Jesus not Master and Lord only, but tender Brother and blessed Friend. We obey him best when we are true to what is right and good.

“Our Friend, our Brôther, and our Lord,
What may thy service be?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following thee.”

So Christianity becomes a reality and a part of our life. It ceases to be profession, and becomes strength and peace. The outward part may perish, but the inward part is renewed day by day.

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[No. 193.]

UNIVERSITY OF ALBANY LIBRARY
JUN 12 1917

THE THORN-BEARER.

BY

REV. WILLIAM C. GANNETT.



PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

THE THORN-BEARER.

IT is nothing exceptional to have a thorn in the flesh, — a chronic bodily infirmity; it is not even exceptional to use it as an element of self-transfiguration. It is exceptional to use it thus as successfully as Paul used his.

To know what Paul did in spite of his thorn and with his thorn, begin at the middle of the eleventh chapter of his second letter to the Corinthians, and read to the middle of the twelfth chapter; then turn back to chapter four, and beginning at "We are troubled," read it to the end. It must have been a most inspiring thing to meet Paul of Tarsus, and spend a half-day with him while he patched at tents, — something to remember all one's after-life. What stories he could tell, that man of three shipwrecks, eight floggings, and one stoning! What does a man think of, when floating a day and a night in the sea? He could have told us. How does a man feel in the hands of a mob? He knew, if he had not forgotten such a ripple as a mob. What were his favorite hymns in prisons? He had a

list ready in his heart. But if we had asked him which of all his pains and perils was the worst, we fancy a quiet smile would have grown on his face as he answered, "My life-companion, my thorn in the flesh,—the worst, and yet the best!"

It is worth while trying to think what such an answer would mean. Worth while, because to many of us the years are apt to bring the thorn, even if no accident, and no bequest at birth, have brought it early. Now the thorn is blindness, now it is deafness, now it is the lameness of a limb, now the wear-out of some internal organ. As many senses and as many organs as the healthful body has, so many possibilities of thorn-growths in us,—that is, of permanent mal-growths, chronic crippings. Now, what does it *mean* to say of such a thing, "The worst, and yet the best"? To say with Paul, "I take *pleasure* in it; for when I am weak, then am I strong"? How can one rise from a catalogue, "Thrice was I beaten," etc., up to that chant, "Troubled on every side, yet not distressed"? Or, rather, not how to get from one to the other, but how to feel like singing the very catalogue as part of the chant! Paul of Tarsus is not here to tell, but every village has its Pauls and Paulines, two or three; and one has perhaps his own smaller, blunter thorn to help explain—like a sort of half-breed interpreter—their experience

As we watch and listen, and try to interpret, something like this seems to be the philosophy of thorn-bearing: —

(1) Face the fate! Accept it as fate, as Margaret Fuller did “the universe,” — something to be neither ignored nor dodged. If it *can* be, if one is still hoping, praying (as Paul tells us he did thrice) that it may depart, it is not yet the full-grown thorn, — the blindness which is to darken all the years, the deafness which is to be life’s growing silence, the lameness which is to make the third limb always necessary. Face the fate, without sentimentalizing about it. Say rather, This thing is to cripple me always, everywhere; it is my life’s condition, — part of *my* universe. Say this, and instantly it begins to grow easier to bear. The struggle against *it* is over, and what remains is simply to struggle against the hinder it imposes. Fate is often not so hard to bear as things curable. The thing curable is an enemy until it be cured; the thing incurable is a companion, and the sole question is how to make it a pleasant one.

(2) Then one learns the difference between acceptance and surrender, between becoming a subject and becoming a victim. The thorn is in the flesh, — it is for me to say, It shall *stay* thorn of my *flesh*, and never become thorn of my mind. It shall not conquer *me* as well as my body. If it be my Rome, I will be its Greece, conquering

in the spirit the brute force that conquers me in body. What Paul, infirm and of base presence, did; what Epictetus, old, lame, and a slave, did (read one book of his, or but his first chapter); what Fawcett, England's blind postmaster, did, — and has just re-done, as it were, in the person of his daughter, inheritor of his high courage, — that can *I* do, and that *I* will! This cramping life-companion I will somehow tame into an ally, make my friend.

(3) The blind man, deaf man, lame man, saying this, soon learns that there are helps awaiting him; especially that people, as a rule, are very kind to any cheerful cripple, — and not from pity only, but from admiration. There is a great deal of delicate allowance made for thorn-bearers, even if they are not brave. We shall have to travel far to find the circle which does not appear to best advantage around its lamer members. Little acts of tenderness and grace spring up about them. For them the elbow of competition turns into the offered hand of co-operation. Each one who is thorned is “a little fellow” to the unthorned ones, and the world is beginning to be a pretty good world for the little fellows in it. But much more than this is true, if the thorn-bearer be a hero in his bearing. To hardly any kind of heroism does the world give readier recognition, heartier admiration, than to his. A man must have conquered *something* to be a hero;

if the something be other men, we give him shoulder-straps, a statue in the public square, and write "General" before his name; if the something be a man's own self, his crippling or his sin, we set the thought of him among ideals in the heart, and begin to call him "Saint."

(4) More and more this fact, that heroism of the rarer sort is open to us thorn-bearers, dawns over us, bringing happy visions. *Here* is a career then, not merely in spite of, but in virtue of, our crippling. If much is cut off from us here is something added, — an Order of Nobility into which cripples alone can enter. Nor can we fail to feel that success here is not only true success, and accredited by the world as true success, but that it is thanked for by the world as high service rendered it. For, sooner or later, all must take their turn and *bear*; and we, the chronic cripples, who have learned the art of bearing well, can strengthen those strong comrades when, for an hour, they need help sorely. What joy so great to a humble soul as the hope of rendering high service, after all? And with this joy comes another, — the joy of entering a noble fellowship. This deprivation, this suffering of mine, if borne well, puts me in the muster-roll with Paul himself, and "all the martyrs' noble host." That chronicle of his, "Five times received I forty stripes save one," and so on, begins to read like some ancestral record of our

house, or a page from the story of "our regiment," — old bravery making brave new battle-fields forever. In such fellowship the Bible meanings deepen to us: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the living of Jesus may also be made manifest in our body." In *ours*; why not? And Jesus' own word about yoke-bearing, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me," — did it mean a yoke like his? Did he wear one himself?

(5) Gradually, while trying to be less undeserving of companionship like this, we realize that it is growing easier for us to "live in the spirit" than it used to be before the crippling came. We cannot help the inference that perhaps it is easier for us than for those who know no thorn. The reason is, of course, that we *are* living more in the spirit in thus utilizing the thorn in our flesh. "The inward man that renews itself as the outward man perishes;" "When I am weak, then am I strong." He was right; he was right! And to be learning in our own experience that what he meant is true, is to be making one's home in places where the Beatitudes were — and still are — born.

(6) One thing more is ours: it is easier now than before the thorn came to sympathize with the humbled, all the hindered, all strivers-and-failers, all those who are bearing pain and loss, and so, first or last, easier to sympathize with all

men. If brave thorn-bearing makes the brave our brothers, still more it makes us brothers to all who are not brave. It is almost impossible to feel the prick of our own pain and be supercilious, or indifferent, or unwilling to forgive a fellow-cripple.

This must be some part, at least, of the meaning that lies within Paul's answer, that, of all his pains and perils, the thorn in his flesh, his life-companion, was the worst and yet the best. Certainly the chemistry whose working in us is thus hinted owes its laws to Life larger than our own, even to that One Great Life which lives as strength and grace through all our trying, bearing, doing. So he called it well, "God's grace sufficient for me," "His strength made perfect in my weakness."

Into the Order of the Thorn only those whose pain is in themselves are privileged to enter. There is one Order of Nobility yet higher, only one; but into this other all who will can enter. The brotherhood whose symbol is the Cross outranks the brotherhood whose symbol is the Thorn.

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25 Beacon Street, Boston.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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[No. 195]

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THE INFLUENCE OF UNITARIAN ISM IN THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL

BY

REV. EDWARD G. SPENCER

UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

OUR FAITH

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ,
we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and practical aims."

THE INFLUENCE OF UNITARIANISM IN THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL.

IN his book entitled "Ultimate Conceptions of Faith," the Rev. George A. Gordon, D.D. affirms that "the social, or Trinitarian, conception of God has passed over into the Unitarian." "The truth is," he continues, "that we have stolen the anthropology of the Unitarians, and they have stolen the essential theology of the Trinitarians; and thus far neither we nor they have had the courage to acknowledge the theft" (p. 373).

Without questioning for the present the accuracy of this affirmation, it is to be observed that there is here a sufficiently frank acknowledgment of the relation of mutual obligation which the Trinitarian and Unitarian schools of thought bear to each other. Apparently the day of uncompromising opposition is passed, and Unitarianism is recognized as one of the many tributaries to the widening and deepening stream of Christian thought.

The admission fails of its full force, however, by reason of being brought forth in the throes of controversy. It appears as a mere symptom of the softening asperities of a contention which another generation, perhaps, will abandon; and while its value as such is not to be underestimated, it is not therefore to be accepted as a complete account of the relation as regards either the one term or the other. It is possible to lift the whole question out of the sphere

of controversy into the wide realm of catholic fact; to discover in both parties to the discussion, not the protagonists who divide the field of religious thought between them, but conspicuous factors of a large movement in human life and thought which is far from being comprehended by the relation under discussion, much less by either of its terms.

The situation as it presents itself is this: There is a reality comprehending the relations of God and man and the world, and there are various more or less truthful accounts of that reality,—its modes and its implications. These varying accounts are represented by the various sects into which Christendom is divided; but the variances are superficial and to some extent conventional, while the correspondences are central and real. The objective of all religious inquiry is one,—the truth concerning the relations of God and man. The methods of interrogating the reality are many, and the results exhibit both difference and identity. The practice of the past has been to emphasize the difference: the tendency of the present is to throw all its stress upon the identity; and men are just awakening to the fact that the area of identity is wider than the area of difference, and the points at which men come together more numerous and more critical than the points at which they fly apart. There is, in fine, a body of sentiment and conviction common to all the unaffiliated groups which constitute the visible Church; and it is this which is tacitly accepted as the basis of a common interest in the distinction between religion and irreligion.

This body of sentiment and conviction is not fixed, but cumulative. Much is accepted upon all sides as settled; much else is in the way of being settled in a

manner acceptable to all. The process is not volitional, but necessary. Men do not determine truth: truth determines men. The Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and it forces the Church to accept of necessity much that it anciently rejected of choice.

Hence it has come to pass that there is a catholic religion,—a religion of the spirit which both orthodox and heterodox have helped to establish, and of which each is inalienably a part. Indeed, the much overwrought distinction between orthodox and heterodox has been worn threadbare; and Jew and Samaritan have borrowed (not stolen) so freely of each other that it is no longer possible to distinguish the one from the other on the strength of his aspirations or his thoughts. The Trinitarian still insists upon the distinction between himself and the Unitarian; not, however, with the accent of controversy, but in the exigencies of his self-defence. The distinction is no longer apparent in his thought: it must be affirmed as his deliberate intent.

So tenacious is this purpose to insist upon distinction where the basis of distinction has ceased to exist that any affirmation of its disingenuousness is certain to meet with denial. There is, however, a stubbornness of fact against which both affirmation and negation are impotent; and it is vain for those who are uttering the same thoughts to deny the sameness of the thoughts which they think. It is not many years since the rector of an Episcopal church in New York was convicted of appropriating *en bloc* the sermons of a distinguished Unitarian of the last generation; and in the investigation and exposure which followed there was no hint that the Trinitarian congregation found the rations dealt to it from the commissariat of the Gentile host in any degree unpalatable.

Such wholesale appropriation of homiletical thunder, however, is less to the present purpose than the unconscious assimilation to which pulpit and press bear an increasing weight of testimony. The value of this testimony, as has already been intimated, is not controversial, but historical. Its effect is to define the large outline of the catholic religion, and to reveal the triumph of the Time Spirit over the militant ardor of the schools. The interest of the Unitarian centres in the historical aspects of the movement, in the vindication of his title to be considered an integral part of the catholic church, visible and invisible, and in the knowledge that he has played, and is still playing, no mean part in the unfolding drama of life ecclesiastical.

As regards the two wings of Congregationalism in New England, the process of assimilation in thought is very considerably advanced, and there is even on the part of the conservatives some disposition to recognize it, as the quotation from Dr. Gordon implies. The statement that "the social or Trinitarian conception of God has passed over into the Unitarian" ignores the changes which that conception has undergone in obedience to pressure from other than Trinitarian forces, and it fails to take account of the fact that the movement from both sides toward a common centre has made the temptation to theft by either side imminent. The impulse to attach one's own distinguishing label to the person or the product of another is a pardonable human weakness of which the Unitarian has no exclusive possession, but it is calculated to excite irritation in him who chooses to wear a label of his own. The tender amenities of twins are not promoted by the repeated intro-

duction of one under the mistaken name of the other; and nothing is gained by superimposing artificial points of resemblance upon the natural likeness of those who were fashioned in the same mould. The Unitarian, as he kneels with his Trinitarian brother beside the still pool of contemplation, is startled to discern in the crystal depths into which they are gazing together neither more nor less than a double image of himself; but he may safely refrain from attaching his own denominational label to the unwilling fellow-original at his side. Let him resist the temptation to classify and console himself with the sufficiently obtrusive fact. Let him not say, "This is Unitarianism" or "That man is a Unitarian"; but let him rather indicate those mirrors in which the double reflection may be seen. He will not want for opportunity to exercise his self-restraint, and he will not mar his enjoyment of the humorous situations in the ecclesiastical Comedy of Errors by anticipating the concluding scene in which the two Dromios are brought face to face.

The writer whose earliest associations and inclinations were Trinitarian was once, with fruitful inconsistency, a member of a class of boys in a Unitarian Sunday-school. Being advised by the long-suffering teacher to read the Works of Channing, he inquired with prompt suspicion whether Channing was a Unitarian. "He was a Humanitarian," was the gently diverting answer; and suspicion was neither stimulated nor allayed. The comprehensiveness of the substitute term escaped the adolescent intellect; and its theological, anthropological, and philanthropic implications did not fructify. Memory of this incident revives under the touch of Dr. Gordon's admission as to the source of the Church's anthropology, and it prompts

the question whether the admission is complete. There are not wanting signs that the modern Trinitarian church has fallen heir to the Humanitarianism of Channing with all the consequences, speculative and practical, which such an inheritance entails; and it is difficult to conceive, in view of what has been admitted, how that result could have been avoided. "It is conceded among believers," says Dr. Gordon, "that man is for man the type of God; in other words, that God is an infinite man. Here the assumption is that the best possible conception of God is of an ideally perfect man set free from all limitations" (p. 365). "Here is our problem," he has said a few pages back. "We seek for the God who is the full and final account of humanity. Here is our method in dealing with the problem. We find the essential nature of humanity, and we try to read the character of God through that essential humanity" (p. 359).

Now Dr. Gordon will, undoubtedly, agree that the problem and the method here defined cannot fail to have profound interest for that school of thought which has taught the world what essential humanity is, and he will pardon the intimation that the doctrine of God which is based upon that teaching can hardly be as foreign to the insight and inspiration of the teacher as his words would seem to imply. Under this rule the parent of the Church's anthropology is the grandparent of its essential theology; and it does not come under the imputation of theft by laying claim to ancestral honors. No one realized this more clearly than the late Prof. Paine of Bangor, who did not blink the inevitable conclusion, but, perceiving the necessary trend of theological thought, had the courage to affirm what he had the vision to foresee.

"If God is not a moral and personal being," says Prof. Paine, "he is to man 'an unknown God.' Hence theology is destined to be essentially an anthropology; and psychology, or the study of man's higher nature, will form with natural science the twin master lights of theological truth" ("Ethnic Trinities," p. 358).

The truth is that the controversy between Trinitarian and Unitarian is losing its meaning for both. It is being merged in the larger question of the essential truths and values of the catholic faith. The truths are so precious, the values so great, the evidence of a common heritage in the whole sum of them is so conclusive, that it is idle quarrel over the question of an exclusive title to a particular phase of the one or a particular form of the other. The question of the merit of one side or the other is dwarfed by the question of fact; and the interest in the fact is wider and deeper than the interest in the claims of its rival interpreters.

Unitarianism has always been less a theological than a spiritual movement. It has struggled and suffered in behalf of the religion of the free spirit as against the religion of circumscribing form; and the fruits of its spiritual conviction and passion are not exclusively its own. They are fruits in the life of the Catholic Church. They are in the life of the Church because the life of the Church is in them, and has reached the branch upon which they matured and ripened through the historic root and stem. How spontaneous is the Church's recognition of its own the utterances of its leaders are testifying. There is an ever-swelling chorus of those who think and speak with that freedom of the spirit for which Unitarianism stands; and that the language of the free is one

language from whatever pulpit it is spoken there can no longer be the shadow of a doubt. The Unitarian, hearing this speech, rejoices, not because the things said and the manner of saying them constitute Unitarianism, but because he recognizes in them the very body and spirit of what Unitarianism is.

That Trinitarian Congregationalism should find its spokesman in Dr. Gordon is fitting, not only because of the conspicuous position which he occupies in that fellowship, but also by reason of the breadth and elevation of his thought. He shall continue to speak in the closer investigation which is to follow, and he shall have the sympathy and support of other leaders of his own communion who have broken through the traditional lines.

The basis of all thinking upon the great verities of religion is the religious conception of man. It is for the sake of light upon the nature, origin, and destiny of man that the quest of a science of religion is undertaken at all, and it is by the truth or error of its doctrine of man that the Church must stand or fall. What is thought and said about man is, therefore, of primary significance in any attempt to determine the place which a religious fellowship occupies in the world of religious thought; and this is especially true of a communion whose traditional attitude toward this question has put the ban of eternal disapprobation upon a large fraction of the human race.

How great a change has come upon Trinitarian Congregationalist thought upon this point the following citations will make plain:—

“Channing’s doctrine of man, his anthropology, has had through his teaching and through the men whom he inspired an immense influence. It has been a pre-

cious influence. It has held on its way because it was truth, and because no weapon found against it has been able to prosper. Channing's doctrine of man, his prevailing teaching about men, is the teaching of Jesus. To Channing more than to any other single influence are we indebted for the revival of the New Testament interpretation of human nature." (Gordon, "Ultimate Conceptions of Faith," p. 34.)

"The kinship of God and man is a fundamental position of faith to-day. It is a living and fruitful truth. In virtue of it we are able to discover in God an eternal humanity, and in human existence an infinite significance. It cannot be said too often or with too great emphasis that there is between God and every man an inseparable association, that there is in every man a genuine incarnation of God." (*Id.*, p. 294.)

"Man is by nature the son of God. We know not, therefore, to what largeness and perfection this human capacity for God may have been brought in one in whom our nature attains its utmost development, and is bound in final and indissoluble union with the God-head." (Newman Smyth, "Old Faiths in New Light," p. 282.)

"To make every man see that, not according to some legal fiction,—not as the result of some possible fact or concession,—but according to the immediate and the everlasting fact he is a child of God, made in the divine image, with all the possibilities and all the responsibilities of the sons of God resting now upon his conscience, is to bring the strongest possible motive to bear upon his life. . . .

"Another corollary of this truth is of vast moment. It means that goodness, the most glorious and per-

fect goodness, is, in the deepest sense of the word, natural to man. Evil may have become a second nature to him, but the evil tendencies are not his real self. . . .

"The evil nature is not I: it is a false, an artificial self, which has usurped a power over me to which I must not consent. I am a child of God, and the divine impulses and motives which I find in my heart are the real man." (Washington Gladden, "Ruling Ideas of the Present Age," pp. 21-24.)

"The goodness of good men and women is off the same piece as the goodness of Jesus, and is a genuine aspect of the goodness of God, and, therefore, a legitimate and valid object for the faith or projective appropriation of other men to lay hold of, and grow into, and make the stepping-stone of their salvation." (W. DeWitt Hyde, "Jesus' Way," p. 46.)

"The favorite method of Jesus throughout was to show the close affinity between human nature acting healthfully and the nature of God." (Charles R. Brown, "Two Parables," p. 187.)

"The laws of my nature are the laws of God's own nature, because I came from God, have God's nature written in my members, and am a child of God, possessing my Father's nature." (Lyman Abbott, "The Evolution of Christianity," p. 115.)

"The power and the light that are always leading toward the unattainable goal are in man himself, in the development of his nature, not as a mere creation of God, but as one in whom God is immanent, and is ever unfolding himself in human ways that are also divine." (T. T. Munger, "The Church, Some Immediate Questions," *The Atlantic*, December, 1903.)

The present generation of worshippers in so-called

orthodox churches receive such utterances as these as familiar matter of course. Indeed it is by the inspiring power of this gospel of a divine humanity that the influence of the churches is being sustained. The teaching answers to the felt necessities of the time. The utterances of the pulpit reflect the demands of the pews, and the new song in the mouth of the preacher obtains the hearing which the old arguments are denied.

Out of this new doctrine of man, which is new only in this sphere of its tardy acceptance, has grown up a new doctrine of God. To meet the necessities of the nobler anthropology the accepted theology must be not legal but vital, not metaphysical but ethical, not awesome but winsome; and orthodoxy vies with heterodoxy in the effort so to depict the character and the purposes of God as to win the spontaneous love and homage of the human heart.

"There need be no shrinking," says Dr. Washington Gladden, "from the clear affirmation that God is the Father of us all; and, having said this, we need not stultify ourselves by going on to deny that we are all his children. The distinction which theology has labored to make cannot be made by human reason. The fact of the Divine Fatherhood in all its fulness, with all its natural implications, must be distinctly declared. If it is true, it is the greatest truth of which any man can think; and we must not suffer it to be confused or belittled." (Ruling Ideas of the Present Age," p. 21.)

"God's moral character is summed up in love, and as such is revealed in all ways to all his moral creatures; and hence the highest form of morality in man,

who was made in God's moral image, is to grow in the divine likeness, so that the whole moral law of the gospel is summed up in the 'new commandment,' 'Love one another.' Love, then, in Christ's teaching became the essence of religion." (Levi L. Paine, "Ethnic Trinities," p. 205.)

"The love which created the world possesses and rules it. It is not the devil's world, but God's world; and he is in it, bringing out the permanent good against the dark foil of the transient evil, promoting every right endeavor, conserving every right achievement, and suffering no sure purpose or aspiration to fail of their final aim." (Philip S. Moxom, "The Religion of Hope," p. 48.)

"All theories that limit the divine regard for mankind are indictments framed against the character of God." (Gordon, "Ultimate Conceptions of Faith," p. 198.)

It is needless to multiply these citations touching the moral character of God and his vital and moral relation to mankind. The view represented here is the prevailing, practically the only view obtaining in the "orthodox" church of to-day. It is the logical complement to the current anthropology, and the presence of the one may be taken for granted in the mind which has afforded lodgement to the other. The interest in this aspect of the Divine Being has an immediate, practical character which makes for substantial unanimity of thought. There is an insistent demand for agreement as regards the meeting-point of the divine nature and human necessity, but beyond the influence of this demand there is scope for wide variation. The beliefs about God, though essentially of one type, exhibit a varying degree of fondness for

the old, outworn garments; and these, oftener concealing than revealing the thought within, produce the effect of difference where no difference exists. Dr. Gordon, for example, assures us that "the doctrine of the Trinity may be classed as a wholesome myth or legend. . . . The product of the metaphysical imagination taken as fact, as exact truth" ("Ultimate Conceptions," p. 361). But he persists in borrowing the tattered habiliments of that ancient fetich to clothe his less angular deity. "The Trinity," he says (p. 374), "is, indeed, a mystery; but it seems to me a mystery that saves the reality of God to the world. When one seeks the truth underneath the symbol, and does not put too much stress upon the arithmetical paradox, the Trinity stands for a social God, the only God who can mean anything great to man." Prof. Paine, on the other hand, declines to clothe his living truth in the torn and patched apparel of dead error. He avows that, "of all the theories, metaphysical and logical, that have originated in the effort to make rational and comprehensible the dogma of the Christian Trinity as three persons in one God, this one of a *social trinity*, though it has the prestige of many distinguished advocates, is the most illogical and fatuous." ("Ethnic Trinities," p. 21.)

"The baptismal Trinitarian formula was not a simple fact of original Christianity, but the result of a historical evolution from the original form which was simply a baptism in the name of Christ. The evolution of the one name to three names accompanied the corresponding evolution of Monotheism into Trinitarianism." (*Id.*, p. 196.)

"Such a doctrine of God cannot be confounded with any historical human being such as Jesus of

Nazareth. Christ himself was a monotheist, not a Trinitarian." (*Id.*, p. 273.)

"It would be no more absurd for any geometer to maintain the natural circularity of squares, or the identity of the globe with the cube, than it would be for any disciple of Jesus to doubt the absolute oneness of God; and the moment any exposition of the Trinity touches the line of tri-theistic speculation, it shivers into fragments against this immovable article of faith." (Rev. R. S. Storrs, D.D., "Evidences of the Divine Origin of Christianity," p. 48.)

"The doctrine of the Trinity in the terms in which I was first taught to express it," says Dr. Washington Gladden ("What is Left of the Old Doctrines?" p. 134), "is a barrier to reason and a stumbling-block to faith. It is only by shutting the eye of the understanding that one can accept it."

The testimony is not always as explicit as might be wished. The desire to preserve the old forms sometimes governs at the expense of strict fidelity to the new substance; and even when the very terms are surrendered there is a tendency to hint that the surrender is not as unconditional as it seems.

"While it is to be expected," says Dr. Munger, forecasting the future of the church, "that the word 'trinity' will not be insisted on, and, as Calvin said, might better have not been used, the phrase 'Father, Son, and Spirit' will pass into the language of the soul, because it defines the forces by which man lives and fulfils his destiny. . . . Its roots go deeper down than the creeds—into man himself. When he has found himself, he finds within him that which is in all nature; and he names himself a son of the Father of all: he knows himself as spirit, and he cannot otherwise define

himself than as one with him who was filled with the Spirit, and so was the Son of the Father." (*The Atlantic*, December, 1903.)

From the new orthodox doctrine of God we pass to the doctrine of Christ; but here Prof. Paine anticipates us, forewarning us that "with the old theology of the Trinity goes also the old Christology, both resting on the same speculative foundation. The inductive historical method brings Christ back to us as a true member of the human race, and turns Christology into a branch of anthropology." "(The Evolution of Trinitarianism," p. 281).

"If there is one historical fact more assured to me than any other in the history of Christian theology, it is the fact that the Christian Trinitarian dogma, with its cardinal Logos doctrine, is the direct lineal descendant of the Platonic Dualistic Idealism." (*Id.*, p. 202.)

"Before his advent Jesus was not; but the Son of God whose perfect human expression he is, is eternal in the heavens. The pre-existence of Jesus I do not find in the teachings of the great theologians with the exception of Origen, and he teaches the pre-existence of all soul. It is not Jesus who pre-exists before his advent: it is the Logos, the Christ, the eternal Son who pre-exists. Pre-existence concerns primarily the doctrine of God, and only in a secondary sense the person of Jesus." (Gordon, "Ultimate Conceptions," p. 293.)

"To human beings God must reveal himself in human ways; that is, through human personality, character, and action. He does so reveal himself in and through every soul in proportion to each soul's capacity to receive and express him. The ~~greatest~~ soul

is the best medium of revelation: through Jesus, therefore, the revelation is pre-eminent." (Moxom, "The Religion of Hope," p. 322.)

"That Jesus was true man has always been maintained. . . . In him humanity in all its qualities and perfections was incarnated. If he transcended humanity, it was in such mode as included rather than excluded it. . . . In many respects Jesus was a distinct type. He transcended all other men in his consciousness of God and in his moral and spiritual affinity with God. . . . He is unique in this respect: as transcending all others. He was a new cause; the power of God in a higher potency. . . .

"The only question that might arise is the question why there has been only one Christ,—why not many God-filled men, transcendent in moral and spiritual creative power? But here again analogy answers the question. There has been only one Shakespeare, only one Plato, only one Homer, only one Raphael. It has been said that Shakespeare is accounted for by the historical and literary conditions of the Elizabethan period, that he could not have appeared at any other time before or since. But, if he was the product of that period, why does he stand alone? Why were there not many immortal Shakespeares? and was not Shakespeare as much a cause as an effect of those conditions?" (George Harris, "Moral Evolution," p. 411.)

"Belief in the birth of Jesus from a virgin I do not regard as an essential doctrine of Christianity. The belief that he transcended humanity rests on his life, teaching, work, and power, not on the manner of his birth." (*Id.*, p. 438.)

"If God is immanent in humanity, and Christ came from God, then he came out of humanity where God

is, by what process is immaterial. . . . If one requires a theory, the most satisfactory is that Christ came from the bosom of the Father, who is immanent in humanity, in accordance with evolutionary laws. As much, nay, all of divinity that can be manifested through humanity can be secured in this way, and it does not alter, but rather it deepens every redeeming power ascribed to Christ: it makes him one with the redemptive process which runs through creation." (Munger, "Review of Abbott's *Evolution of Christianity*," *Outlook*, New York.)

"The modern argument for the divinity of Christ is very simple: Love is God. Christ is our highest, completest, historical expression of love. Therefore, Christ is the Son of God, our Interpreter of the Divine, our vision of the Father. As Rev. Theodore C. Williams has happily expressed it:—

"God gave the world his son; and he was known
For God's own son, because he took the throne
Of perfect love, that seeketh not her own,
And, freely giving as to him was given,
Made love on earth commune with love in heaven."

(W. DeWitt Hyde, "God's Education of Man," p. 30.)

"Does this divinity in Christ differ in kind, or only in degree, from the divinity in men? There are differences in degree so great that they become equivalent to a difference in kind; but with this qualification I answer unreservedly. The difference is in degree, and not in kind. There are not two kinds of divinity, and cannot be. The divinity in man is not different in kind from the divinity in Christ, because it is not different in kind from the divinity in God." (Lyman Abbott, "The Evolution of Christianity," p. 73.)

Inseparable from the doctrine of Christ is the doctrine of redemption which springs out of it and rests upon it; and this, says President Harris, is the doctrine that has undergone the greatest modification from purely ethical influences.

"Until recently the usual representations of atonement were justly open to the charge of immorality. Even now such representations continue to be made to a considerable degree. The moral sense is shocked at some of the reasons given for atonement. The imputation of our sins to Christ has been so stated that it seemed as if all regard for righteousness were overlooked. The penal suffering of Christ was regarded as the philosophy of atonement. It was believed that God laid on Christ the penalty of our sins, or a suffering equal to penalty. . . . The love of Christ making its great way to men at the cost of suffering is the motive which leads men to repentance, but has been represented as the motive which induces God to forgive. This disappearing theory fails to satisfy because it is immoral, because it places salvation somewhere else than in character, because it converts the sympathy and love of Christ into legal fictions, because it places the ethical demands of justice above the ethical necessities of love." (Harris, "Moral Evolution," p. 407.)

"Christ was declaring that his true mission was 'not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' It was a mission of service to others even to the point of giving his life; and the power of such a service in his view was its moral effect on men, not its sacrificial effect on God, as if there could be any remission of sin by the shedding of blood. Christ never taught such a doctrine. It was as far as possible from his own point of view. . . .

"The effect of his death was to move men's hearts by the spectacle of love, not to propitiate and satisfy the divine wrath or law. The later doctrine of a mediator who comes between two parties that are estranged in order to reconcile them seems never to have occurred to him." (L. L. Paine, "The Evolution of Trinitarianism," pp. 290, 291.)

"What is Atonement? It is what a parent suffers because of his child's sin. It is the painful sacrifice a father makes in going down into the sinful situation where his children are entangled, to win them back to righteousness." (Charles R. Brown, "Two Parables," p. 193.)

"Whatever truth there may be in the ideas of imputation, substitution, vicarious sacrifice,—and I am glad to be able to see a world of noble meaning in them,—they do not in any way conflict with the fact that righteous character and nothing else is salvation; that character is the achievement of the personal will; that it can be won in the deepest sense only by the soul for itself; that God himself cannot bestow it except through the agony and bloody sweat of the human spirit." (George A. Gordon, "Sermon," Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, N.Y., Nov. 4, 1897.)

"His atonement is the reconciliation of man to God, and the method of reconciliation is revelation. He revealed man to himself, and he revealed God to man. By his sufferings he revealed man to himself. It was human bigotry and envy that crucified him. Thus the death of Christ revealed to man the depth of sin in his own heart as it had never before been revealed: . . . not only in his sufferings, but in his whole life he reveals God to men. . . . He reveals that God whom he has taught us to call Our Father." (Washington Glad-

den, "The Atonement in Modern Religious Thought," chap. xi.)

"In what sense can we say that Jesus is the way to God and into the life of God? Certainly not in the sense that he purchased God's love for us, for his whole mission is declared to be the result and expression of God's love. Not in the sense that he took away any barrier in the mind of God to mercy and forgiveness toward men: for such a barrier, did it exist, would be a barrier to the love itself of which Jesus' coming was the supreme expression. Men have often crystallized their doubts of God's love into the very theories of atonement by which they assumed to show how that love could be efficacious in saving sinners." (Philip S. Moxom, "The Religion of Hope," p. 322.)

"There is an element of truth in calling it a ransom he had to pay to the evil principle dominant in the world, as for centuries the early Christians did; but we are nearer the simple facts of the primitive gospel if we regard it as the price love had to pay for being true to itself in a world where pride and hate were in possession of the religious system, the social prestige, and the political power." (W. DeWitt Hyde, "Jesus' Way," p. 127.)

"A doctrine of Atonement may be deduced from his teaching,—has been deduced from his teaching; but the doctrine of the Atonement is a deduction. Christ nowhere gives expression to it in a philosophical or doctrinal form." (Lyman Abbott, "The Evolution of Christianity," p. 139.)

"Redemption is not the restoration of man to a state of innocence from which he has fallen. It is the progress of spiritual evolution by which, out of such clay as we are made of, God is creating a humanity

that will be glorious at the last in and with the glory manifested in Jesus Christ." (*Id.*, p. 257.)

The doctrine of the atonement has long been the touchstone to determine "soundness" or "unsoundness" in what has been known as the traditional "faith." These citations have, therefore, a significance which it would be difficult to overrate. They indicate not only the failure of the old theological tests of orthodoxy, but also the absence of any common principle of interpretation of an important theological symbol. Nothing is left of the old dogma but the name, and the name stands for as many different views of the *modus operandi* of redemption as there are teachers to expound it. It stands for the love of Christ as the motive which leads men to repentance, for the revelation of the Father by which men are won to love and obedience, for the moral effect upon men of Christ's unfailing faithfulness, for a process of spiritual evolution by which God guides humanity toward the type of Christ.

What is especially to be noticed is the total absence of definition, and the transference of the entire drama of redemption from a celestial to a terrestrial setting. The event in which interest centres and upon which the ingenuity of interpreters is exercised is a human event; and its effects are human effects, arising from human causes and influencing human lives in familiar human ways. There is no hint of a celestial compact, no savor of bargain-driving, simply the potent historic fact, the natural consequences which follow it, and its fertility in suggestion to varying types of mind.

Behind these differences of thought, however, there is a broad-based and significant identity. These are

the utterances of men who, within their self-imposed bounds, have achieved a noteworthy triumph. They have discovered that truth is larger and more manifold in its aspects than the accounts which men give concerning it, that there is in the attractive power of the truth itself a centripetal force sufficient to overcome the centrifugal effects of disagreement, and that it is possible for them to differ widely amongst themselves without breach of fellowship.

These discoveries have had consequences, and the consequences are such as might have been foreseen. There is a freedom of speech which has increased in volume and in the accent of certainty to an extent alarming to the few surviving champions of the moderate Calvinism of the last generation. The pace of progress has been accelerated within a decade, and it would be easy to indicate the men in whose earlier and later utterances the quickening of pace is to be discerned.

The freedom which these men exercised and enjoyed, surreptitiously at first, has come to be openly avowed and boldly demanded as the prime necessity of religious life. It has directed critical eyes upon the churches, their creeds, their historic assumptions and pretensions, and has summoned them to make good their claims and their titles to recognition and continuance by the tests of reason and of adaptability for human service.

In a sermon delivered at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, N.Y., Nov. 11, 1897, Dr. Gordon declared that "for all thinking men who are in any measure open to the new light and spirit of the time Calvinism, as an adequate interpretation of the ways of God with men, or even as a working philosophy of life, is forever gone "

(The New Puritanism," chap. iv). On the same occasion President Tucker, of Dartmouth, speaking on "The Church of the Future," expressed the conviction that "the church can never realize its own working unity until it makes a sufficient place in its life for freedom, particularly for intellectual freedom."

Other voices are audible, uttering the same views with the same accent of conviction.

"It is my own deliberate judgment, formed from a long and careful survey, with some exceptional opportunities for reaching a true result, that traditional Christianity with its old creeds and dogmas and forms is passing as a religious force out of the great currents of thought and belief among the intelligent masses of men and women with a rapidity that is simply alarming to every open-eyed Christian observer." (L. L. Paine, "Ethic Trinities," p. 296.)

"The current creed of Christendom is a chaos of contradictions. Truths and lies, facts and fancies, intuitions and superstitions, essentials and excrescences are bound in one bundle of tradition which the honest believer finds hard to swallow whole, and which the earnest doubter is equally reluctant *in toto* to reject." (W. DeWitt Hyde, "God's Education of Man.")

"So long as the church exalts herself by arrogant pretensions to be the bearer of a spiritual life distinct from the life of practical social service, it will be deserted by the strong, brainy, forceful men of affairs, and left to languish in effeminate sentimentalism, and die of clerical conceit." (*Id.*, p. 195.)

"The thing to be done at present is not to crowd upon men a system conceived in some way to be true, nor to bind them down to a hard, literal, undiscerning reception of texts, but to set forth the identity of the

faith with the action of man's nature in the natural relations of life, to show that the truth of God is also the truth of man." (T. T. Munger, *Atlantic*, December, 1903.)

"No mistake can be greater than to suppose that shutting up religious truth in binding forms, either of creed or church, acts otherwise than as a fetter,—forms preserved, but dead. They provoke a return to the heresies against which they protest and rebellion against the authority that binds them. . . . There is one thing that man loves more than religion, and that is freedom. He has an instinct for each, but the latter conditions the former. When it is cramped, religion itself shrivels." (*Id.*)

"The great error of the Church has always been its assumption of authority over the souls of men in all matters of faith and dogma; and the natural fruits of dogmatic authority have always been, and always will be, insincerity, hypocrisy, cant, and all their evil brood." (L. L. Paine, "Ethnic Trinities," p. 315.)

"The church that shall endure must be one whose law is love,—love to God and love to man." (P. S. Moxom, "The Religion of Hope," p. 63.)

"The unity of the Church will come in only through the brotherhood of man." (W. J. Tucker, Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, N.Y., Nov. 11, 1897.)

Now it is to be observed that the truth makes friends of those whom it makes free. Freedom is itself a unifying power of the highest efficiency, and it exerts upon those who have learned to love it an influence making toward unity which very marked differences of thought are powerless to resist. It is not easy to believe that the fellowship observed to exist amongst those who differ can long be confined within the bounds which

they have seen fit to impose upon themselves. Indeed the bounds are already widening, and there are certain intimations on the part of the bolder leaders of the new movement of an approaching fellowship of all the free. "The creed is enlarged by reduction," says Dr. Gordon. "The energy of belief like Gideon's host is increased by being cut down. The really great things stand out clear and high, and the mind elects to study them and to allow the rest to go" ("Ultimate Conceptions," p. 26). And Dr. Munger, in a lecture on the religious influence of Whittier, avers that "there is now no question between the two forms of Puritanism. Questions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy are getting to be counted trivial. All are moving steadily toward those moral and spiritual realities which are the possession of no sect and no party."

"The only refuge of the churches," he says in a later article, "is in planting themselves on this eternal thing (*i.e.*, doing good). If men or churches are doing good, they can carry a heavy load of heresy or dead orthodoxy and live. . . . The essential idea of Christianity as the divine expression of humanity leads men to fellowship, and a sensitive nature shrinks from the Church except as it stands for and with a common humanity rather than apart from it." (*The Atlantic*, December, 1903.)

Dr. Lyman Abbott, speaking at Tuskegee, March 8, 1893, had preceded Dr. Munger in this vein:—

"Christianity is larger than any epoch, any race, any temporary condition. It is more than Catholicism or Protestantism or Puritanism or Anglicanism, and it is for you, taking this message of law and gospel, of righteousness and of hope, to work out, under your

own leaders and teachers, a divine life of faith and hope and love in your own way."

The Rev. P. S. Moxom also perceives that "Christianity as the effluence of the living Christ overflows all boundaries, transcends all forms, and convicts all definitions of inadequacy and error. Everything is transitory but the spirit." And he believes that "among lovers of Christ and God and human kind, differences of creed and ritual and polity will grow like differences in feature and accent and address, giving picturesqueness, perhaps, to life, but raising no bar to sympathy and fellowship." ("The Religion of Hope," pp. 22, 163.)

No one with even the most superficial knowledge of the history of New England theology can follow these citations, and fail to be impressed by the magnitude of the change which has been wrought. He will be no less deeply impressed by the tranquillity with which the change is recognized and accepted by the churches. Images of the men who, a decade ago, lifted their voices in strenuous but useless protest will cross his field of mental vision, and he will marvel that their efforts have so utterly and irrevocably failed. He will perceive to what earlier type the "new" thought of the new orthodoxy conforms, and he will readily identify the spring from which the stream of Trinitarian heresy is fed.

It is not the purpose of this paper to establish the Unitarianism of Trinitarianism, nor to separate the goats from the sheep within the Trinitarian fold. The distinction which is lost in the fold cannot be perpetuated in the field; and the motive for the attempt is wanting where the loss is palpably gain.

That the Good Shepherd has other sheep which are not of his fold the Unitarian has always cheerfully acknowledged; but he cannot refrain from rejoicing in that process of development which is rendering it increasingly difficult to distinguish the one flock from the other. More and more the bleating of the flocks approximates to a common key. The sounds produced strike upon the Unitarian ear like the familiar sounds of his own household of faith. They are pleasant to the hearing of him who loves them, though they be uttered with an accent varying slightly from his own. The accent is not important. The sounds and syllables are, because they testify that the Universal Church, in all its numerous divisions and under all its various names, is speaking in the common tongue.

It is a speech familiar to the Unitarian, and he is at home wherever it is heard. He hears it much in this latter day, and it apprises him of new sympathies and fellowships. Hearing it, he rejoices, and, interpreting it, he is made glad, saying: "I am no longer alone in the world. These are my kindred, speaking in mine own mother tongue of the things of my Father's house. This, indeed, is not Unitarianism, but it is what Unitarianism is."

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

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¶ This volume deals with the cardinal points of religious belief from the author's Unitarian point of view, and goes far to clear up confused popular ideas about these truths. The pillars upon which this temple is reared are sturdy columns of rational religious conceptions which devoutly concern the development of the higher life.

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THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY."

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A REASONABLE EASTER

BY

REV. ULYSSES G. B. PIERCE

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

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(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

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A REASONABLE EASTER.

"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?"—Acts xxvi. 8.

PAUL was before Agrippa permitted to speak for himself and plead his own cause. So stands Faith before the bar of Reason, defending her own hopes. Like Paul our line of defence may be that our faith is not incredible, but is in the line of probability. Leaving aside any direct evidence and ignoring all testimony for the moment, it is no small thing to establish the probability of our hopes and to see that it is not incredible that God should raise the dead. Of two propositions we are bound to accept the less improbable. If it can be shown that it is more probable that our life should continue forever than that once begun it should suddenly come to an end, it may confirm our own faith, even if it fails to convince Agrippa.

This morning let us apply to our hope of the eternal life this theory of probability that the great Laplace used to call "good sense reduced to calculation." For the sake of brevity and clearness let me put the matter in the form of a few simple propositions.

I. In the first place it is no more improbable that we should continue to live than that we should have begun to live. To one contemplating the idea from a distance of time and space it would seem quite incredible that from the mass of organic matter God should raise a man. If such an one had estimated

the chances of such future development, it might well have seemed improbable. But such incredulity is rebuked by the life that is. Like Paul we are here permitted to speak for ourselves, and the miracle of the life that now is makes it seem less miraculous that we should continue to live. Here, as elsewhere, possession is nine points of the law. Of course, if there were direct evidence that with the decay of the body man ceased to be, the probabilities in the case would count for nothing; but there is no such evidence. For if, on the one hand, immortality is not proven, neither on the other hand is it disproven. "That the life of man ceases with the death of the body" said the late John Fiske, "is the most colossal instance of baseless assumption known to the history of philosophy." It is not to be expected that all scientists would accept that statement of the case. Yet the so-called objections of science are less serious than is sometimes supposed. For the most part science is non-committal. If some scientists disbelieve, others say with Dr. Coues, "There are no facts known to modern science which make it difficult to believe in the survival of individual consciousness after the death of the body." This should at least assure us that no man need apologize for believing in his own eternity.

Suppose for the moment that there were no direct evidence one way or the other on the subject, yet it would be altogether rational to accept that interpretation of life which is most congenial to our hearts and our hopes.

II. In the second place it is more probable that in the world there are beings superior to physical man than it is to suppose that we exhaust the possibilities of the universe. We know no bounds to the universe,

nor any limits to its possibilities. It is a colossal conceit to suppose that man is the acme of all creation, and that in its boundless ranges no higher type of life is reached. That we *know* of no higher being than man is not in point. Doubtless the dog questions the possibility of higher forms of life than his own, and to him probably his master is only a larger and more kindly quadruped. It is not incredible that this is our own situation. But a moment's consideration reveals the absurdity of the assumption. We are related upward as well as downward. We have a future no less than a past. The present life with all its richness may well enclose and conceal a form of being compared with which the physical life of man is crude and elemental.

There are many forms of life invisible to us. There may be higher as well as lower. In that category what for the lack of a better name we call "angels" may be as well entitled to a place as are microbes. Life ascends to the infinite as well as descends to the infinitesimal. It is only of comparatively recent date that these tiny forms of life have been made to show themselves or were even known to exist. If this moment we were encompassed with higher beings, we might be complacently unconscious of it. It may be as Milton fancied that

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep."

It is not for me to say that such is the case; but it is no more unreasonable that there should be forms of life superior to ours than that there should be types of life above the brute. In fact, the probabilities point in this upward direction. Man is not the *Ultima Thule* of organic life. It seems to me that this is the

logic of the case; and, as we stand on the shore of life's boundless ocean, it is unreasonable to say to its swelling tides, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

The late Dr. Bruce, who certainly was not prejudiced in favor of this line of thought, said, "One who believes in evolution as a law of the universe in all stages of its history is bound to admit that the presumption is in favor of its operation continuing in the state after death."

III. This suggests the third proposition: If there are higher forms of life than physical man, it is more probable that their ranks are recruited from human beings than that such beings should be created *de novo*. At least this is the method of procedure elsewhere. If evolution means anything, it means that all life is a continuous chain, highest and lowest being inseparately connected. And man may well be included in this

"Subtle chain of countless rings,
The next unto the farthest flings."

It is more probable that we are in the line of promotion to higher capacities and activities than that we are to drop out of the line of march. That there are latent in man powers that might well connect him with a higher type of life is more than an assumption. Man feels within himself the stirrings of a higher life. Something pecks at the imprisoning shell. On his horizon there is the first pink blush as of the new day. It is true, as Tennyson sings,

"Here sits he shaping wings to fly;
His heart forebodes a mystery;
He names the name Eternity."

You will at once think of that notable passage from "Through Nature to God." Words like these from such a man as John Fiske are not without deep significance. "So far as our knowledge of nature goes," says he, "the whole momentum of it carries us onward to the conclusion that the Unseen World, as the objective term in a relation of fundamental importance that has coexisted with the whole career of mankind, has a real existence; and it is but following out the analogy to regard that Unseen World as the theatre where the ethical process is destined to reach its full consummation."

I may not have quoted his words exactly, but I think I have correctly expressed the thought of this great scientist; and, as almost the last utterance of that profound thinker, the words are of great weight. They hint that beyond the physical life of man there is a form of life which is its logical sequence and fulfilment. And it is interesting to see how another great soul contemplating the subject from another point of view says practically the same thing, though in different words: "It is possible that the distance of Heaven lies wholly in the veil of flesh, which we now want power to penetrate. A new sense, a new eye, might show the spiritual world compassing us on every side."

These words of the great and good Channing stand out on the page of his sermon like a marked passage. They are none the less important because written more than a half century before those of Fiske. These words prove nothing, I am not trying to "prove" anything; but it is certainly worthy of consideration that two minds of such different training and of opposite temperament, viewing the subject at a distance of nearly seventy years, should agree that the physical

life of man bears relations to a higher type. They certainly did not deem it "a thing incredible that God should raise the dead."

IV. In the fourth place note this: Given a theory that fits and supplements our present knowledge and which is not disproved by known facts, the probability is that the theory is true. This is no new test of an hypothesis. Devise a position of the arms that will perfectly fit the poise and posture of the Venus de Milo, and it was probable that such was the original form of the sculpture. Fifty years ago Bessel advanced the theory that Sirius, from certain strange behavior noted in the star, must have a companion, whose time of revolution he computed to be about fifty years. It was a mere theory with no facts to "prove" it. But Clark with his telescope sixteen years later *saw* what Bessel *foresaw*. With Neptune, history repeats itself. From certain variations from an assumed regularity it was suggested in 1821 that beyond the limits of the planets as then known there must be another planet, whose pull was felt by Uranus, though the body was not seen by man. Adams and Leverrier located the distant body—on paper, and in 1846 Galle observed the planet. So it is. Some hypotheses are so reasonable, they explain known facts so clearly and perfectly, that we unhesitatingly accept them. And it is on this principle: Given a theory that supplements our knowledge and is contradicted by no known facts, the probability is that it is true.

Now why should the working of this principle be confined to the physical plane of life? Our life is incomplete where we assume ultimate completeness to be the goal. Our sense of justice finds no room for

its full orbit. Certain observed variations of life justify the postulate that the present is not the bounds of life, that beyond this and a part of it is the life dreamed of by saints, sung by poets, and to be entered—by all!

From the life that now is, with all its incompleteness, its moral insufficiencies, with no free scope for the sweep of its spiritual laws, we are justified in deeming that the life of man has larger orbits and other relations than our star charts show. Man's incompleteness prophesies his perfection. Time points to eternity.

You remember that passage in the Autobiography of Goethe, where he speaks of the Strasburg Cathedral? "To me," he says, "it seems quite as great a pity that this one tower is not completed, for the four volutes end much too abruptly. Four light spires should be added to them as well as a higher one in the middle, where the clumsy cross now stands." When asked who told him that such additions should be made, Goethe's reply was that the unfinished structure argued its own completion. And not in vain such prophecy. Soon the superintendent of the building replied, "In our archives we still have the original design, which says precisely the same, and which I can show you."

Change "man" for "cathedral," and the prophecy is no less true. The tower of life ends quite too abruptly; and how the cross does thwart our purposes and crown our insufficiency! We are not yet finished. In the archives of God the design calls for a fuller and richer life even than this. The present is promise and assurance of the future, and the word of Scripture is true, "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee till I have done that which I have promised unto thee."

I do not need to be reminded that these propositions leave much to be said, that they raise more questions than they answer. I know well enough that the line of thought we have been following does not constitute a "demonstration." Now, I want to say why it falls short of proof. I think few of us have ever read an argument for immortality that did not fail to satisfy us. Such is the fact. Our interpretation of that fact has usually been that our dissatisfaction arose from some flaw or weakness in the argument. I accept the fact of dissatisfaction, but the interpretation of it, I think, is quite wrong. We are unconvinced, not because of the weakness of the argument or the insufficiency of the evidence, *but because of the constitution of our own minds.*

Note these two characteristics of our minds and see how inevitable it is that any argument or any kind or amount of evidence should fail to satisfy us. If a spirit should come back to us this moment, we should forthwith ask certain questions that would weaken the evidential effect of the experience. Why is this? Is it the fault of the evidence, or are there certain traits of our minds which make it impossible for us to rest unquestioning? "The fault is not in our stars but in ourselves."

In the first place man is a forward-looking being. It is his nature always to crave more. It is impossible to satisfy us. If we were satisfied, we should at once become dissatisfied with our own satisfaction. This is no play on words. Man is restless and chafes and frets behind any imprisoning bars, though they be bars of logic. If, by the most irrefutable logic and the most direct evidence, it were shown to us that at death

man simply sheds his body and glides and ascends into a higher life, as I believe is the case, what then? We would accept the logic, and then ask, What after that? Our present life doubtless once appeared to us as a future: that future life being gained, we at once speculate about a next. And so it is ever. The question is shifted, not settled. We will not, we cannot, rest contented. Life itself makes us restless. The expanding soul will not be bound with the cords of logic. It is in our very constitution, then, that any kind of argument or evidence should fail to content us.

“To vision profounder
 Man’s spirit must dive;
 His aye-rolling orb
 At no goal will arrive;
 The heavens that now draw him
 With sweetness untold,
 Once found—for new heavens
 He spurneth the old.”

In the second place it is a law of our being that we can know only as we live. We can be assured of the future, and we can speculate about it; but we can *know* only the life that is here and is now. Life is a scroll which we can read only as Time unrolls the mystic parchment. The path of life has many sharp turns, hiding alike our heretofore and our hereafter. Only the short, straight section of to-day can be really known. No amount of evidence can make plain to the boy what it is to be a man. He is perfectly justified in the assurance that manhood awaits him, he may reasonably enough speculate about the nature of that coming estate; but the boy *knows* only as he lives. We may assure ourselves that after our threescore years and ten life still awaits us. It is altogether rational

to question as to the nature of this higher manhood, but no amount of argument nor any kind of evidence can make us know more than we live. It is the way we are constituted.

“Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no,
Not yet that thou art mortal,—nay, my son,
For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
Not yet disproven. Wherefore thou be wise,
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt.”

These two characteristics ought to make it plain, then, that it is not wicked for us to “doubt” even here. Doubt is simply uncertainty. To think is to be uncertain. Uncertainty should set us thinking.

But it should not be forgotten that certitude is an article that most of us carry a very small stock of. And fortunately we need little of it. There are few things of which we are absolutely certain, yet this in nowise mars our happiness or curtails our usefulness. We act on probability. No one knows that the sun will rise to-morrow. No one needs to know. It is enough for us that, as the sun rose yesterday, the probability is that it will not fail to-morrow. On that simple probability we live and act.

Why should we not be as wise and trusting about the Great To-morrow? If our minds are so constituted that we cannot rest unquestioning, if from our very nature we cannot see both sides of a globe at once, we may at least assure ourselves that there is another side which we shall see and understand—when we reach it.

That there is, however, awaiting us something better than dust and ashes ought not seriously to be questioned. That those we loved and lost are not gone far

or forever, that ought not to seem a thing incredible to one who all his life long has been living not by certainty, but by probability, who has walked "not by sight, but by faith."

I have utterly failed of my purpose, however, if on this Easter day our hope appears simply as a great probability. It is a probability, but the probability is so strong that it amounts to moral certainty. With that we can reckon with the confidence of the astronomer who weighs an undiscovered star and of the chemist who describes and names the element before he has found it. It was Professor Ramsay who, speaking before the Chemical Section of the British Association in 1897, opened his address with these words: "The subject of my remarks to-day is a new gas. I shall describe to you later its 'curious properties,' but it would be unfair not to put you at once in possession of the knowledge of its most remarkable property—it *has not yet been discovered.*"

We are justified not only in affirming our eternity. Though it has not yet been discovered,—that is, uncovered,—we, too, may speak of its "curious properties." There are three of these "properties" that we associate with all forms of life, and we cannot think of our Easter life without them. We can imagine no soul so chastened and purified that these properties will cease to be its native air.

Life without motion and activity would be but another name for death. It is impossible to think of the human soul in contented idleness. This, I take it, was what prompted the saying about Jesus, that "he descended into hell." His associates could not think of him as indifferent and inactive even in the higher world. The life that found its heaven in help-

fulness here naturally took up similar occupations there. Preaching to "the spirits in prison" must have been as congenial to the Master as it was helpful to the hearers. Quite in accord with this, Lowell says of Channing:—

"Thou art not idle: in thy higher sphere
Thy spirit bends itself to loving tasks,
And strength, to perfect what it dreamed of here
Is all the crown and glory that it asks.

"For sure, in Heaven's wide chambers there is room
For love and pity and for helpful deeds;
Else were our summons thither but a doom,
To life more vain than this in clayey weeds."

Nor is this all. Nothing is good for and by itself. The stones in quarries, the trees in forests, the cattle in herds, men in families,—this formulates for us the law of association which we cannot imagine annulled in the higher life. To be released from artificial associations and freely to gravitate to our "own place,"—that would seem to be the element of truth in the popular doctrine of heaven and hell. The world is wide, but not wide enough to keep the loving and the loved apart. Jesus will "descend into hell," and forthwith hell is transformed into heaven. Such an alchemist is love!

The third "curious property" is the law of growth. Work, Companionship, Growth,—are not these "the three graces" of life? No soul so sinful but its closely folded petals will one day feel the expanding life. None so pure as to be self-satisfied. Development will be the best expiation, and the continuous chastening of the soul a beautiful purgatory. Was not this Longfellow's inner meaning when he wrote:—

“Day after day we think what she is doing
 In those bright realms of air;
 Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,
 Behold her grown more fair.

“Not as a child shall we again behold her;
 For when with raptures wild
 In our embrace we again enfold her,
 She will not be a child;

“But a fair maiden, in her Father’s mansion,
 Clothed with celestial grace;
 And beautiful with all the soul’s expansion
 Shall we behold her face.”

We sometimes speak of things as too good to be true. It is a curious inversion. If we could only make things good enough, they would already have become true. Rest assured that the fondest Easter hope is only a hint of the inheritance that awaits the children of God.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

A list of free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional and practical works, will be sent to all who apply.

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II. *Associate Membership.* Other individuals desiring to affiliate with the Association may become *Associate Members* by signing an application card (sent upon request) and the payment of \$1.00. As such they will receive a certificate of *Associate Membership*, also *Unitarian Word and Work* (the monthly magazine reporting denominational news), each new pamphlet as it is issued, and occasional other communications from Headquarters.

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DO YOU BELIEVE IN HUMAN
NATURE, OR DO YOU
NOT?

REV. CHARLES E. ST. JOHN

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
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25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

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DO YOU BELIEVE IN HUMAN NATURE, OR DO YOU NOT?

A MINISTER whose opinions carry weight in the orthodox circles of Boston, in an address in which he undertook to point out the errors of Unitarianism, affirmed that those errors all spring from the Unitarian's confidence in human nature. All Unitarians may be grateful for every voice that is lifted to call attention to this fact, for all Unitarians cheerfully accede to the truth of the statement. Our theology does indeed centre upon our belief about human nature. We with all our heart and mind believe in human nature as a spiritual force capable of all good. We believe that the human soul is in truth a child of God, that it tends by nature toward righteousness and growth rather than toward evil and decay. Whatever doctrine may logically be deduced from this conception of human nature we right eagerly add to our Unitarian theology.

The careful student of religious teachings should be able to recognize that herein lies the sharp difference between the Unitarian Church and all religious bodies which lack this confidence in human nature. They that teach that man is a fallen being, irretrievably lost save in so far as he is rescued by an acceptance of a divine intervention, may upon that thought logically erect the scheme of doctrine known as Orthodoxy. Despairing of human nature, an earnest soul must of necessity take refuge in the Trinitarian conception of Jesus Christ. But the person who does not despair

of human nature may not reasonably seek that or any other refuge. I am aware that at the present time many persons are trying to make the impossible combination of believing, on the one hand, that sin is a purely individual matter, not ingrained in the nature of the soul, and, on the other hand, that Jesus was a miraculous personage commissioned to offer mankind the only way of escape from sin or its penalties. I venture to make the assertion that any seeker after truth who accepts intelligently and confidently the idea that the soul is born in innocence and makes its own battle with temptation, becoming responsible only for its own sins and inheriting no moral taint from the sins of any ancestor, and who will with absolute open-mindedness and disregard for personal inconvenience sit down and think out the logical deductions from such a belief, will be compelled to abandon his Trinitarian theology, and will find it necessary to come to the stand expressed by a minister of an orthodox body who writes me the following words: "I have become convinced that I can do but little more as a minister of the gospel until I can stand on a common platform with the liberal church. I have tried to put this matter off and go on preaching as I did when imbued with the old ideas, but I am at last compelled to rest my case."

I do not for a moment question the sincerity of any earnest minister. I do seriously ask whether many have not neglected to think the problems of theology out to the end. Do you believe in human nature, or do you not? If you do, the system of theology of which present-day Unitarianism is a clear-cut phase comes forth logically, irresistibly, and gladly. If you do not, then that system of theology which is called Trinitarian appears with the same sort of logical se-

quence. The modern line of cleavage between Orthodoxy and Liberalism is at this point.

Well-informed Unitarians do not need to have me call attention to the fact that our idea of God is made beautiful by our conviction that the noblest work of his creative hand is a trusty thing, and not a failure. They do not need to be reminded that from this conviction there arises a natural and warm-hearted loyalty to Jesus as the finest exemplar of the life which all the children of God are capable of living. Equally needless is it for me to point out that for all who hold this conviction it is a joy to be alive and share the intellectual and spiritual advance of the ages. Whatsoever truth our brethren of the older time have grasped all men are free to stand by while bravely seeking the larger aspects of truth by the attaining of which our souls shall grow.

Yes, brethren of conservative views, we Unitarians believe in and trust human nature. We are ready to stand or fall in the esteem of the world on the strength of that trust of ours. If we are mistaken, we shall in due time disappear from the affairs of mankind. If we are right, the progress of civilization, the moral improvement of society, and the spiritual enlightenment of the world will increasingly testify to the justice of our cardinal doctrine. Is it necessary to add that we who believe that human nature is capable of all good are not led by that faith to overlook the dark presence of sin in the world? We are conscious of it, we are fighting against it; but with us it is not an abstraction, nor is it rooted in a superhuman personality opposed to God. With us it is an individual matter. Each person may fall into sin, and whosoever does sin will be gloriously helped to recover from his sin by the fine

self-reliance which is born of belief in human nature. The sinner happily possesses many helps outside of himself. He is helped by inspiring lives. He is helped by prayer. He is helped by the love of God. But he that is thus helped is a power unto righteousness in himself, and without any other aid whatsoever he may, if he will, conquer his sin and cast it out of his life.

So far as the consequences of sin are concerned, each repentant sinner may welcome the assistance of all his comrades, of all great teachers, of Jesus, the greatest of all teachers, and of the Lord God Almighty. For these consequences reach out subtly and terribly beyond the power of one man's recall. The race must endure them and fight them. The whole army of the children of God together must build on ancient ruins the lovelier temples of a new life. Unitedly we must build our heaven, and, as we build, we may serenely know that we who thus patiently make the best of all conditions and slowly succeed in turning misfortunes into the pathway of success are by birthright immortal.

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25 Beacon Street, Boston

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A list of free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional and practical works, will be sent to all who apply.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Individuals desiring to co-operate with this Association may receive a certificate of Associate Membership by signing an application card (sent on request to the Associate Department) and the payment of one dollar. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

FORM OF BEQUEST

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars, the principal to be securely invested and the income to be used to promote the work of the Association.

SONGS IN EXILE

BY

REV. PAUL REVERE FROTHINGHAM

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

SONGS IN EXILE.

"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"—
PSALM cxxvii. 4.

THERE are many passages full of pathos in our Bible, and many touches, too, of deep and moving tragedy. And why, indeed, should there not be, for our Bible is a Book of Lives. As we turn its pages and read its history and study its prophecy, we are turning the leaves of human characters, reading the records of throbbing hearts and puzzled minds, interpreting the hopes and dreams of eager and insistent consciences. From the story of Adam, who was banished from the garden for his disobedience, to the experience of John, who sees the Holy City in a vision, the book is one long narrative of human joy and sorrow, peace and strife, gain and loss, encouragement and failure.

The situation under which the words of our text were written is a graphic instance of this human element, and one no less which has peculiar interest and deep significance for all who share the sorrows and uncertainties of human life in general. The chosen people were held for a time as captives in a strange and distant land. The nature of this famed captivity is surely not unknown, at least in part, to almost every one, although it still remains a curious fact that Hebrew history in general is a most neglected subject. We teach the children in our schools and the young people of our colleges the facts of greatness that exalted Greece, and the records of romance regarding

Rome. They learn of the Persian movement westward under Xerxes, and of the Greek invasion of the East as led by Alexander. But of Israel's part in Eastern politics and of her share in Asiatic strife they are taught at best but very little, and of that too much which is not true.

What are the facts, however, of the Jewish exile, when the Lord's song, if rehearsed at all, had to be chanted in a foreign land? Why, this! The time came in the march of history when the armies of Assyrian conquest camped beneath the sacred walls. The Holy City was besieged, then captured, then destroyed. The temple was torn down and left in ruins; the defences were utterly demolished; the houses of the rich and great became a shelter for wild animals and birds of prey. For the flower of the people, as the ancient custom was, were forcibly deported. They were carried away and made to begin a new life in the country of their conquerors. By the rivers of Babylon, whose king and people had subdued them, there they sat down in grief and consternation. They hanged their harps upon the willows in their loneliness and utter dejection and despair. For those who had carried them away captive asked them to sing their psalms of religious trust and hope. But how, they asked, could they sing the Lord's song in that strange and dreary land?

Such are the words of this plaintive and familiar psalm which was written at the tragic time of the captivity. And the land must certainly have seemed a strange one to this proud and peculiar people. They had believed themselves a chosen race, and here they were rejected; they had felt themselves the favored of Jehovah, and now they found themselves forsaken by

their God; they had looked upon their little land as the land of mighty promise, destined to become the seat of glorious empire, and, lo! it lay behind them trampled and forlorn. How, under such conditions, could they lift their hearts in praise and trust, and sing the Lord's song of reliant faith?

The words, as we repeat them after all these years and centuries, strike an answering chord in almost every heart among us here. That question certainly is one which most of us have often asked ourselves, sometimes silently and half-unconsciously, but again with resolute and stern defiance. For all of us at times are led off into strange and unfamiliar lands where we are held rebellious and dejected captives. The things that we have learned to love and hold most dear seem far away, and likely never to be ours again. We, too, if we may speak in natural and suggestive metaphor, have periods of pitiful imprisonment, when we are oppressed by failure, sorrow, loss, affliction, disappointment, pain. Some cruel, unrelenting fate has marched against the city of our joy and pride, where peace and plenty, privilege and power long have reigned in steady and serene security. The walls and natural defences of the soul are ruthlessly destroyed, and the very temple of our love is laid in silent ruins at our feet. In times like these we ask with all the bitterness of old, How can we sing the Lord's song in this strange and cheerless land? In the hour of suffering or loss or cruel hardship, is it either natural or possible to think of goodness and protecting power as guiding and controlling all things? What songs, forsooth, can we rightfully be asked to sing, whether of hope or trust or faith, under such conditions?

Let us think of this to-day with what directness and simple earnestness we may. Let us look at the nature of these lands, and consider the resistless forces that bear us off and keep us captive there, that we may come, if possible, to understand some little of the daily meaning that they have for nearly all of us.

It is not my thought, let me add at once, to seek the meaning of pain, or the mystery of suffering, or the reason why afflictions of one kind or another should be laid upon us. In other words, it is not my wish to inquire why God forever should permit us from one age to another to be led away in exile by various forms of evil. That is a question which the wisest even never have been able to answer with entire satisfaction to themselves and others. No! Let us be contented for the moment with the lesser problem. Granted that these lands exist, and that all of us have some acquaintance with them, whether for a longer or a briefer period, the question is,—What songs, if any, may reasonably be expected of us when we dwell within them? What accents of reliance? What psalms of confidence and trust?

First of all there is this to be thought of and acted on with sturdy resolution. If we cannot lift our hearts and voices up with the old-time songs of praise and deep thanksgiving, at least we need not exaggerate the evils of our lot, nor act as though our sufferings and hardships were abnormal, and not to be compared with those which others have to bear. Lowell, I believe, has emphasized the need that we are under of learning "to burn our own smoke," which has been interpreted to mean that we are "not to inflict on outsiders our personal and petty morbidnesses, and not to keep thinking of ourselves as exceptional cases."

The truth of the matter is, indeed, that when we fall into this habit of complaint and exaggeration we do not inflict others merely, but we heap additional infliction on ourselves. There is no hard lot in life which cannot be made distinctly harder by bitterness of spirit and sullenness of soul; and there is none, upon the other hand, which a cheerful and contented spirit cannot half redeem of sad and depressing features. The sternest period of captivity has some elements of freedom in it; and no land exists in which some flowers do not grow, or where, at least, we do not have the arch of God's deep sky above us. When loss and sorrow take the very sun out of the firmament, and the night of loneliness shuts in around us, then, if nothing more, the friendly stars shine down upon our path. Then, too, in time the mighty orb of memory, which bears upon its face the brightness of the sun's reflection, climbs up behind the black and silent hills with power to illumine the entire surface of the world.

Moreover, it is in the darkened periods of exile that hands of helpfulness are reached out eagerly to aid us, and that we are made to feel the beauty and the great abundance of human sympathy and love. We often do not come to understand or to value fully things like these until the iron forces of Assyrian doom have led us off from what was blessed and serene contentment.

And, if we should not look upon our ills and losses as unusual in their magnitude or character, so we ought not to look upon ourselves as singled out in some especial way, or as exceptions to the laws of life, that we should have them laid upon us. Defeat is just as much a feature as success in the world's immense

vicissitude of good and evil. Captivity is just as much a part of it as freedom, loss as gain, sorrow as joy; and because of life itself we have to meet the element of death. None of us have any permanent or peculiar right to plenty, peace, and power. We have to take life as we find it. We cannot buy up property in spiritual estate, or stake out extensive claims in the realms of happiness or health which the laws of life are bound to respect. Trespassers can neither be forbidden here nor brought before the court for prosecution, and all attempts to fence one's self away as having special privilege is worse than useless. The lot of the Hebrews in their exile was all the harder to endure because they had thought themselves a chosen people, the favorites of God, and their land divinely set apart to be uncommonly and permanently blessed. And thus it is with each of us. "The world," as some one has said, "cannot be our intimate friend, patient with our eccentricities, smoothing our paths. We must learn this just as we learn not to pick up a live wire," and not to get in the way of destructive forces generally. For, "if it is true that God makes no two men alike, it is equally true that he sends his rain on the just and on the unjust, and rules his universe with inexorable laws." If we do not learn this, if we insist on thinking that we have a special right to freedom from hardship and disappointment, then the periods of captivity, when they come upon us, are certain to be so much the more desolate and trying. In short, there is a very simple and practical philosophy of life which none of us can learn too early or too thoroughly. The wise and seasoned sailor does not leave the placid waters of the sheltered harbor, expecting that the ocean all the way across will be per-

manently calm and the breezes gentle day by day in long succession. No matter how large the vessel is in which he sails, he faces the possibility of storms and tossing. He does not worry about them in advance, or gloomily anticipate their possible fury. But, when they come, he knows that they are just a part of life for those "that go down to the sea in ships, and that do business in great waters."

Whether or not, therefore, we can sing the Lord's song in the strange land of captivity to loss or disappointment, this at least we see is true: we need not make its evils worse by dwelling on our hardships as exceptional or peculiar to ourselves.

But let us go on to inquire if there are not psalms which were beautiful in our days of freedom, which fit as well, or even better, the seasons of our exile. One such song there surely is for nearly all of us, which God himself forever bids us vigorously sing: it is the glorious and helpful hymn of Hope. There is always light upon the dim and darkened pathway of the future: there is always promise on before, however sad the past may be or burdensome the present. For who shall say, or who can know? It may be that the time will come when God shall turn again the captivity of his people Israel, when they shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace. Then they will build again the waste places, and restore the happiness and peace which had departed. Thus it was with the Jews themselves when hardly half a century had passed. They lived in hope. They cherished the unfading dream of building up again what they had lost, and of getting back what once was taken from them. And, lo! the time in truth arrived when those who held them captive were overthrown in turn. The

Persian hero Cyrus laid the kingdom that oppressed them low, and opened suddenly the door for their deliverance. Then it was that every valley became exalted, and every mountain and hill was made low. And in the wilderness a way appeared, and a highway in the desert. The ransomed of the Lord had found release.

And that is the way it comes to be again and yet again in daily life. The bars of life that shut us in seem fixed forever: the barriers of opposing circumstances seem complete and permanent obstructions. It frequently will happen, though, that even when the obstacle remains we come at last to make our way around or over it. The apparently impassable at times is passed over with patience, and new security and peace secured. The seemingly invincible is conquered and subdued. Man, who is lord indeed of all this lower world, acknowledges no permanent defeat. Because he can look before as well as behind, because his eyes forever seek the heights and his feet are restless to attain them, therefore no conspiracy of circumstance can hold him wholly in defeat. It is much indeed as it is with the enterprising and resourceful traveller, who makes his way across the great obstruction of the mountains, along and up a winding, inconspicuous pass. Some of you perhaps have left the railway in the narrow valley of the Rhone in Switzerland, to drive from the dreary little town of Brieg across the famous Simplon route to Italy, or to go from that other village in the valley up and on across the mountains till you reach the sheltered solitude of Chamouni. As you make your way along the dusty level of the lowlands and see before you the sheer and rugged sides of the towering Alps

you wonder where the road can run, and how it ever can be possible that you shall pass beyond those giant peaks, and reach at last the unseen resting-place that lies there, somewhere in the dim beyond. As you push your patient way ahead, however, some unexpected gorge appears, some slender zigzag path, some friendly slope that leaves you room to reach around the ridge of awful rock, till that which seemed a hopeless barrier comes to be a spot of glorious outlook and magnificent prospect and attainment.

And so in life. The mountains of sorrow, the barriers of difficulty, disappointment, hardship, failure, pain, seem to shut us closely in the narrow valley of despondency and gloom. But we may always have the song of hope within our hearts if not upon our lips. We may still believe that a light will shine, a path be opened, a way of release be found.

That is the first song, therefore, that we always ought to sing in a strange and friendless land. And a second is like it, namely this, the song of Work,—of work for its own sake and our own, and, better still, for others. The first is a song whose burden is some way of getting *out* of our captivity: the second is a psalm for making all things better if we have to stay forever *in* it. Just as we saw that no lot in life exists, however hard, which cannot be made indefinitely harder by bitterness and selfish pride, so we may likewise say that none exists which cannot be lightened somewhat by cheerfulness and unselfish interests of one kind or another. No land in life is so dreary that there is not work which may be done there, and none so lonely that we cannot find some work to do for others. The fervent heart, the active mind, the energetic will, —these are the agencies that lend to life its cheer, that

explore the favorable features of the very prisons of the world, and find at last some ray of goodness in the things most evil. After all, we carry our climate with us wherever we may go. There are those who suffer exile and Siberian cold in the midst of ease and plenty, because their hands are idle and their hearts a bleak expanse of wintry storms. But there are likewise those who carry summer sunshine with them to the barren moorlands and the lonely shore, because their love is warm, and sympathy forever uppermost in all they think and do. These people have more freedom in captivity and greater joy in exile than others ever find in the face of opportunity and privilege.

Whether we go upon our way sighing or singing, therefore, is dependent not so much upon the manner of life itself, as it is,—if I may use the wise expression of another,—upon “our manner of looking at life.” We are rich or poor, free or bound, at home or in exile, not according to our *outward*, but our *inward*, state. All of us can train ourselves to look upon the bright side of a dark experience and the helpful features of a hard occurrence, just as much as we can train ourselves to see the things of beauty in an ordinary landscape and the qualities of goodness in a doubtful character.

Do you know the question and the answer which are written in the ancient Persian Scriptures in regard to where the fairest land is found? “Tell me,” runs the query, “Tell me, gentle traveller, who hast wandered through the world, and seen the sweetest roses blow and brightest gliding rivers, of all thine eyes have seen, which is the fairest land?” And the answer comes: “Child, shall I tell thee where nature is most blest and fair? It is where those we love abide.

Though that space be small, ample is it above kingdoms: though it be a desert, through it runs the river of paradise, and there are the enchanted bowers."

The work of love, the psalm of service,—that is a song which we may wisely sing, therefore, with our lips and through our lives, in each strange and dismal land where we may dwell.

But can we sing the Lord's own song in a strange and dreary land,—the song, that is, of trust and confidence in God's eternal goodness, mercy, love? Hope we may have, and love we may employ; but can we still have faith? Yes, I believe our lives will still be musical with faith, wherever we may be, if hope abides and charity endures. For faith in God is built on faithfulness in man,—faithfulness to duty, to spiritual interests, to high and holy ends; and these are virtues which can be exercised as well in sorrow as in joy, in times of loss and disappointment as in seasons of abundance and success. But, in order that faith may still abide with us, this most of all is needed,—that we do not let our heavy darkness blind us to the great and joyous radiance which is poured out freely upon others, nor allow our light affliction to take away the knowledge that peace and happiness are still the lots of most. Around the land of our captivity there reaches still in boundless distances the world itself of freedom, opportunity, and blessing. Let it be with our belief in goodness as it is with our belief in God himself. "For only this one thing," it has been said, "we must never disbelieve. Let us say we cannot believe in God or heaven or immortality ourselves, if that indeed be the condition of our souls. . . . The uttermost woe that can come to a man from this direction is not the inability he feels

in himself to find these mighty confidences, but the inability to believe they *ever* have been found. Let me still rest in this solid certainty, that multitudes through all the ages have succeeded where I have failed, winning the bread I hunger for, finding the answer denied to my cry, the answer that I shall surely find in the fulness of time or of eternity."

When this is true of us, when we look beyond the personal to the human, and through the individual shadow to the all-embracing sunlight, then shall abide for us a stedfast Faith, no longer to be shaken by the storm of circumstance nor wasted by the force of slow despair,—that faith, indeed, which Hope shall brighten and Love renew from day to day. And these together form the Lord's eternal song which should constitute the burden of our lives in each strange land where we may dwell.

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I. *Life Membership.* Any individual may, by the payment of \$50, become a *Life Member* of the American Unitarian Association. Such a person is entitled to vote at all business meetings, to receive the Year Book and Annual Report, and, by means of frequent communications, is kept in touch with the various enterprises promoted by the Association.

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Address communications and contributions to the

American Unitarian Association
25 BEACON STREET BOSTON, MASS.

THE REPROACH OF CHRIST

BY

REV. WILLIAM H. LYON, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

OUR FAITH

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ,
we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.)

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THE REPROACH OF CHRIST.

“Accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.”—HEBREWS xi. 26.

THE reproach of Christ is not that which he gave, but that which he received. He chose the new way rather than the old, to go out from the beliefs and customs in which he was born rather than compromise with error. There is no question with him who reads the New Testament understandingly that Jesus expected, when he began his ministry, that he could gradually enlarge the minds of his countrymen and take them at last with him into the light which he saw. The failure of this hope was the tragedy of his life. The most pathetic thing in Jesus' career was not his death, but his disappointment. The decisive moment was not his trial, but the time when “he set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem.” Then he had given up all hope of a peaceful development of the old faith into the new, and prepared himself for warfare and martyrdom. From this time on we hear much from him about condemnation of rebels; and almost all his parables, from the Prodigal Son to the Last Judgment, divide men into those who hear and those who will *not* hear the message of truth.

His countrymen faced him with equal sternness. They persecuted, imprisoned, and at last slew him. They inflicted upon him—or the Romans did for them—the most disgraceful death known to them. Such

was "the reproach of Christ," the displeasure and outlawry which fell upon him, because he forsook the ways of the fathers and followed his own conviction. He left much behind. We can imagine how different a life he might have led if he could only have accommodated himself to the ideas of his time. How delightful it might have been for him to give himself up to a life of study and meditation in beautiful Galilee, or to have had pleasant converse with the great variety of men that flowed unceasingly through that much-traversed province from all parts of the civilized world, or even to have become a rabbi and been popular with his zealous countrymen. All this he put aside. He took instead the persecution of his own people and the contempt of the Romans, who could not understand why he should suffer so much for so visionary and minute differences of opinion. What was truth that he should trouble himself about it? This was the reproach of Christ, from the scribes and Pharisees on the one hand and the Pilates and Gallios on the other,—the scorn and hatred which fell upon him for leaving the comfort and popularity of the old ways for the pain and outlawry of the new.

So Christ became a type. The reproach of Christ passed into a proverb. Any one who gave up pleasant things for the truth was said to accept the reproach which fell upon Christ. So Moses was said to have accounted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. That country was still looked back upon as the synonym of wealth and comfort. The land that was fertilized automatically every year, the pyramids and the temples, the horses and chariots,—all combined to impress upon the national memory the ideal of splendor and luxury. To have turned

his back upon all this, to have come out of the royal palace where he had been so romantically made a member of the household, and to have taken to the desert with his tribes of slaves, was for Moses to "count the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

But how times have changed for the Christ! Now the world which turned its back upon him follows him. The Christian Church is one of the established institutions of the civilized world. The wealth and social favor of the day are identified with it. It costs no unpopularity to be a Christian. Christianity has grown conservative. It holds to the past. It dreads change. It has been one of the fiercest or most stubborn foes to new truth. It has planted itself squarely in the path of reforms. It is one of the bulwarks of right and justice as universally agreed upon, but not quick to take up the right and justice which are beginning to be discerned. In fact, it may be said to be almost the settled policy of our modern churches to allow no subject to be brought into the pulpit for discussion until it is very generally decided. This is not said as an accusation. Such a course has much good sense and even necessity upon its side. The church is not a debating club. It is the place where great moral and religious principles, around which the Church has gathered, are to be worked into personal life. But it is the truth that the Church of Christ has been often the most sturdy opponent of new ideas,—scientific, ethical, and theological, from Galileo to the higher criticism. It stands to-day, in other words, where scribe and rabbi stood in the days of Christ, and the reproach which was put upon Christ for following new light the Church in the name of

Christ puts now upon others. The treasures of Egypt are now in the hands of the representatives of Christ. The daring reformer has become the conservative institution, the wealth and respectability of which make new ideas bad policy. So the Church often comes to account the treasures of Egypt greater riches than the reproach of Christ.

Looked at from one point of view, this is one of the most cheering spectacles in history. It shows what can come from devotion to truth. It proves that no poverty can be so great, no obscurity so dark, and no persecution so thorough that a brave man with justice and light on his side may not hope for victory.

From another point of view, it may be rather a discouraging spectacle. It shows how utterly a man's whole spirit may be transformed, turned into its opposite, by those who carry on his work after he has gone. It is ludicrous to think, for instance, of Jesus being made responsible for these magnificent and complicated rituals which make so much of his name. He said scarcely a word about worship except that, when a man prayed, he should go into his closet, shut the door, and pray to his Father, who seeth in secret. His religion was not only of the simplest itself, but he is never recorded as going to the Temple sacrifices or as recommending them to his disciples as a permanent institution. It is ludicrous, again, to hear long creeds quoted as Christian which contain scarcely a doctrine that Jesus taught, their points being gathered from Paul or the Old Testament. We have only to imagine Jesus in the robes of a ritualist or the Sermon on the Mount printed in parallel columns with the popular creeds to see how tremendous a distance lies between them.

So it is with the conservative *spirit* of the Christian churches of to-day. It is the very reverse of the spirit of Christ. He was the dissenter, the come-outer, the progressive of his time. The reproach of just such people and of just such a temper as the Christian Church of to-day has was the reproach that fell upon Christ. I do not mean to say that he would not be a Christian to-day, that he would not find himself at home in our churches, that he would insist on another gospel from that which they indorse, but I do mean to say that the spirit that animated him was quite different from that which marks the churches that bear his name. They are conservative, he was progressive; they face backward, he faced forward; they are timid, he was bold; they cling to the old forms in art and doctrine, he demanded new bottles for a new wine. The breath of the future blows through the Gospels. There is a freshness in the words of the Master that made the multitude listen with a sense of promise and hope. He spake not as the scribes, but with the authority of one who sees for himself. We feel the beginning of that personal power which is to last through the centuries, keeping the world moving. And, after he had said what it seemed best for him to say, he intimated that there was more to come. There were many things yet to be said, but they could not bear them then. The spirit of truth would take them in hand and lead them into all truth as fast as they were ready for it. The face of Christ was set forward.

There is need to bear this spirit of Christ in mind just now, because our generation is coming very fast to the parting of the ways. What with physical science on the one hand and the higher criticism on

the other, the old foundations at least of our Protestant faith are giving way, and more and more people are finding themselves without religious belief. Some of them, for the sake of keeping the forms of truth in which they have been brought up, are going to fall back upon authorities which they once disowned. They are afraid to go out into the dark and find what waits for them. They cannot bear the strain of doubt or the nakedness of unbelief. They will do anything to lay hold once more upon definite doctrine, provided they are not asked to be responsible for it. It is a position easily understood, and it is not mentioned for blame or ridicule. The singular thing about it is that such a spirit is very sure to claim the name and sanction of Christ, and to denounce the spirit of independence and free inquiry as a forsaking of him. Now whether or not the doctrines which they grasp so eagerly are Christ's, the spirit in which they grasp them is not—is the very opposite of his. The reproach of Christ was the abuse that came upon him because he turned his back upon the old and the authoritative, and went forward into the new and the unpopular. There is something ludicrous, therefore, in the pious airs which the reactionary give themselves and the lofty superiority which they assume over the daring progressive. There is something naive in this attaching the name of Christ to the spirit of the scribe and Pharisees.

One would not disturb this comfortable delusion if it were not that it tends to discourage that which was most essential in Christ and most distinctive of the Christian spirit. We cannot have our frankest and most thoughtful young people left to believe that in going forward and not back they are parting from

Christ. We cannot afford to have that great name arrogantly monopolized where it does not belong, and sadly abandoned where it does belong. We must say most firmly to those bright minds who are trying to think out for themselves a living creed, that this haughty exclusiveness and this sour scorn which the reactionary are showing toward them are "the reproach of Christ,"—not, as seems to be thought by those who show them, the reproach which Christ would give, but that which he received and perhaps would receive if he were here now. It came upon him for the same reason that it comes upon them, because he would not go back to the old which did not speak to him, but insisted on going forward for whatever awaited him. All speculation about what he would believe if he were here to-day is vain. It is hard enough to tell what he believed then without adding a new difficulty. But about the spirit of his life there can be no doubt. The reproach of the stationary and the reactionary fell upon him because he was of another temper and faced another way. It is the progressive and not the conservative who has the spirit of Christ.

There is, of course, a reckless and irresponsible way of seeking the new which is not of Christ and which deserves the reproach that fell upon him. There is an itching after new truth that comes, not from deep thought, but from shallow, that is restless because it is shirking all serious thinking and all deep experience. Jesus loved the new because he had tested the old in his own life. He had been brought up in the old, and he knew, from what he saw in others' experience as well as felt in his own, that the time was ripe for the higher truth. He was always reverent toward the old, knew that some had not yet exhausted it, and

called the new its fulfilment, not its contradiction. Paul had had a hard time with the law before he moved on to the gospel. The time to look for new truth is when the old no longer satisfies the real needs of an earnest life. The only fair test of a faith is its power to comfort or to inspire in some great stress or crisis of the spirit. We hold the vision of our fathers in a loose and formal way until the bitter sorrow or the sore temptation comes. Then we grope in our medicine chest for the household remedy and apply it. If it works upon us as it used to work upon others, we value it as we could not have valued it before, and we put it where we can easily find it. But, if it fails in our case, we conclude that constitutions change with the generations, and seek some new remedy. But there are few of us who can estimate the value of spiritual medicine by merely looking at it and shaking it. It is the use that tells. Nothing is easier than to discuss religious opinions. To him who simply discusses them they are merely opinions. There is little value in those off-hand decisions that are so hotly given for or against old dogmas. There is a relation between a faith and the mental and moral development of a generation or an individual that settles its usefulness better than any discussion. This may reveal the fact that you have or have not outgrown the old faith, but it does not often make any other difference. We laugh at Calvin and Edwards, but we must not forget that the men whom Calvin taught saved liberty for Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon Europe, while the generation to whom Edwards preached made the Revolution and the Declaration of Independence possible.

The use of a doctrine does not seem to lie in its

formal truth, but in a certain fitness to the nature of those who hold it and to the work which they have to do. That volatile disposition which we often find in unthinking persons to run after the latest view of science or the most novel heresy or the most fashionable orthodoxy is a very different thing from the sad abandonment of an old and dear doctrine because it has proved useless in some spiritual need and the search for new truth under a sense of deep responsibility for its genuineness. Whether Jesus had any such pangs in parting from the faith of his fathers we do not know. He never gave us his spiritual history as Paul gave his. He may have ripened gradually and passed unconsciously from the acid requirements of the law to the sweet reasonableness of the gospel, but in both cases the change was a deep one. It was not a change of opinion, but a grasp of the soul upon what was its true food. The liberal who has passed through such an experience has followed Christ. The thoughtful conservative who holds to his faith because it still helps him is also not far from the kingdom of God. But the shallow and hasty liberal is as far from Christ as the stupid and stubborn conservative, and much farther than he who stands by the old dogma because to him it is ever new in its satisfaction of his real need. The man who roams from speculation to speculation as an intellectual diversion is less to be honored than he who has burrowed down to the heart of some venerable doctrine and there finds shelter from the storms and nourishment against the wastes of practical life.

But, when the soul demands new truth, the time has come to seek it. What the earnest seeker will find is not just now our question. The point is that

he must not feel that in giving up old views of Christ he is giving up Christ himself. He must not be misled by the fact that the name of Christ is written all over the ideas and the institutions which he is forsaking. He must not be daunted because men stand at the door of the old churches and cry out to him in the name of Christ to come back to the old ways. He must not be betrayed by the grief of friends over his parting from them or by the sadness of the good over his spiritual decline. All this was the reproach of Christ. It is exactly the experience through which he had to pass. It was he who said, "I come not to send peace, but a sword; for I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." How proudly we remember such words as these when we think of the struggles by which we came out of old ways! How easily we forget them when we see others passing out of ways that have become old to them! Let us beware how we try to lock up the spirit of Christ in any set of doctrines. The spirit of Christ is the spirit of liberty and of progress. It is one with that divine spirit that works at the heart of the world, and drives all things that live forward and upward from form to form. God in himself doubtless is always the same; but God as he incarnates himself in creation and manifests himself to us grows forever, moves forever to the finer shape, the larger truth, the higher power. To stop would be to die, and to seem to stop is only to prepare for some glorious outburst of energy and some quicker impulse forward. The spirit of God is the spirit of life, and life is growth and progress. Such is the spirit of Christ who is God's best representative. It is the spirit of reverent ad-

vance, and it is another instance of the irony of his fate that he should be so often pictured as holding up his hand to stop the march of truth.

If, then, any man find the faith of his fathers no longer true or helpful to him, and hears the call out into the future, though it be into the dark, let him not think that he is leaving Christ behind. It is the spirit of Christ that is in him, and the unpleasant consequences which come upon him are the reproach of Christ.

When art shall revive again, when the commercialism of to-day shall have fertilized the souls of men, so that new ideals shall begin to spring up, let us hope for a new portrait of the Christ. That weary, sorrow-stricken, often weak and forlorn face that has been imposed upon us as his must be as untrue as it is unwarranted. We no longer wish for a leader who tells us by his despairing countenance that this is a hopeless world, and that the sacrifices we make for its sake are of no avail. We want to be shown a Master whose face has upon it the marks of courage and confidence, of being equal to whatever persecution and contempt the world may heap upon the bearers of new light. Such he surely was. The reproach of Christ was not too much for him. The spirit of life and liberty, of motion and progress, was undaunted in him. He is the patron saint of all those who see the light and press toward it, and then take calmly whatever comes with it. He is the inspiration and companion, not only of those who go on to new religious truth, but of all seers and reformers in whatever department of thought. Even the humblest of us have fellowship with him. There is no fidelity to truth in however small a matter, no sincerity in thought, speech or

action, that is not a following of the Master. Whatever it costs is the reproach of Christ. They who say that Christianity is defective in that it does not teach the virtue of intellectual honesty forget that, if Christ gave no precept, he gave himself. If he could have accommodated himself to the old, he would have lived and died in peace and popularity. He died on the cross because he was true to the inner vision and to the truth given him to speak. What better can any one do for intellectual honesty than to die for it?

So we must not allow ourselves to be overawed by those who call us back to outworn ideas of God and man under penalty of forsaking Christ. Christ is always on the side of freedom and of truth, as he was in his own day. Where men hold in truth to the old, where they follow in truth the beckoning of the new, there is the Master. Let us "stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith *Christ* has made us free."

FOUNDER OF CHRISTENDOM

By Goldwin Smith

Size, 5 1-8 x 7 1-2; pages, 44; price, 50 cents *net*; postage, 4 cents.

THIS little book is remarkable as the clear, concise, and masterful presentation of the character and mission of the Founder of Christianity from the point of view of an eminent historian. Without religious bias, with unprejudiced interpretation of facts, by a calm logic that does not suffer shipwreck on a sunken theological reef, the author, known on two continents for his scholarly attainments, presents to us a view of the Man of Galilee that wins by the charm of its simple, human, and rational appeal. Here we see a man of commanding nobility stripped of ecclesiastical glamour, a leader who leads through the power of triumphant virtue and unselfish consecration to a great work, as drawn by one who, in sympathy with his intense humanity, looks upon the Nazarene as the highest type yet achieved by the race. It is not too much to say that in brief compass one cannot find a more sane, helpful, and really inspiring interpretation of a life so potent throughout the centuries.

APOSTLES' CREED, THE

An Analysis of its Clauses with Reference to their Credibility. By Archibald Hopkins

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 3-4 inches; pages, 207; price, 60 cents *net*; postage, 9 cents.

ATHOROUGHLY sane, thoughtful, and discriminating examination of the Apostles' Creed, clause by clause. The special treatment in this volume is that of a layman applying principles of common sense and of clear, logical, untechnical processes of thought to the problems involved. It is a fearless, sincere search after truth, without shrinking from results, and a forcible statement of conclusions and the reasons therefor, expressed in language wholly free from theological or philosophical terms. The author is iconoclastic only for the sake of becoming constructive in the end; he seeks to remove wholly the old, already crumbling structure of dogma only for the purpose of securing the foundation of a rational and more enduring religious belief.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

American Unitarian Association

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO
“DIFFUSE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE
THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY.”

IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

IT MAINTAINS (1) executive offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, with a staff engaged in the direction and extension of the work of our fellowship of churches; (2) a Publicity Bureau for diffusing Unitarian principles through the medium of the public press; (3) a Social Service Bureau for quickening and guiding the philanthropic endeavors of the churches; (4) a Library of religious books, histories, and memorabilia.

IT PUBLISHES (1) the Hymn, Tune and Service Books and devotional literature for the use of liberal churches; (2) a considerable number of standard books illustrative of Unitarian history and teaching; (3) the Works of William Ellery Channing, and many sermons, tracts, and pamphlets for free distribution; (4) the Annual Year Book of the Unitarian Fellowship, and many Special Reports and Bulletins upon different phases of the work.

IT AIDS (1) more than a hundred churches and missions in the conduct of their regular work, in building churches and parsonages, and in supporting ministers; (2) students in preparing for the ministry; (3) fellow-citizens of foreign birth and speech in preparation for the duties and privileges of American life.

IT CO-OPERATES with the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, which gathers together the adherents of liberal religion from all parts of the world; with the Japan Unitarian Association, the Consistory of Unitarian Churches in Hungary, the Brahmo-Somaj of India, and many other similar agencies and organizations.

IT ADMINISTERS endowments (1) for the benefit of schools and churches of the Unitarian order; (2) for the relief of poor and worthy ministers and the widows of ministers; (3) for educating young men for ministerial service; (4) for providing public lectures in centers of population; (5) for the benefit of schools for colored people in the South; and (6) for many other beneficent purposes.

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WHY WE SHOULD BE LOYAL TO UNITARIANISM

BY

PROF. FRANCIS A. CHRISTIE

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

WHY WE SHOULD BE LOYAL TO UNITARIANISM.

BY FRANCIS A. CHRISTIE.

We *shall* be loyal to our church if our church has value enough. I wish to tell what value it has in my estimate of things. I am old enough to know one thing,—that we are all hungering for happiness, and that nothing can give us happiness but a certain spirit in ourselves and in all our associates. That is the spirit of goodness; and goodness means love, friendship, self-sacrificing sympathy, and help. If we love with hearts that really beat for one another, and hands ready to aid one another, then we shall never do an act that can blight another's life or cloud another's rightful joy. If we have that, we could all share crusts with one another and be happy. If we have it not, then a palace would be only a proud misery. If we have it not, we know what hell means. If we have it, then heaven is in us and around us. When we have it not, there is chill and loneliness. When we have it, God is in us. "When thy heart enfolds a brother, God is there."

That is a simple religion, you see, but it gives us happiness and contentedness and heavenliness and God. What more can we ask? Now the great value of Unitarianism is that it says clearly and boldly: This is religion. This is the essence of *all* religion. This is the religion of Jesus. This is possible for all men. This will unite all men in one common spirit of human friendship and loyalty, and cure the moral evils of society.

With the other versions of religion it is not so simple. Most of them have refused to let a man hope for religious good and happiness, and the comfort of knowing that God is in our common daily life, until he has sacrificed the rights of his mind to inquire and examine and judge. Once, on the shores of the Mediterranean, men enjoyed this simple religion of goodness; and they began to explain the how and why of it. They fitted it into the science they had in those times,—some sixteen hundred years ago. Their explanations were made church doctrine, and every man had to accept the explanation or be treated as a criminal. But modern science is wholly different, and the old explanations will not do now. Nobody would invent them now if the thing were being done in our age. The explanations were at the first valuable and sincere convictions, freely adopted. Now they are in contradiction to our knowledge. You have to break or bend your mind to adopt them; and most people simply adopt them without any personal effort,—simply because the churches teach them. These older churches deny the right of any man to hope for goodness and happiness and God, unless the man obediently accepts these dead doctrines without revision or retesting. In recent centuries the one church has been split into many churches. Each group insists on some part of the old explanation as more important than the rest. In this way our human society has been divided into unfriendly groups that will not worship God together or seek goodness together. The sufferings and miseries of the world are not relieved by this, but increased. True, for the last fifty years there has been a better state of things. The churches are not so unfriendly to each other; and they all begin to say that, after all, the good character is the main thing. There is a plain reason for this change. The reason is that a

company of courageous people, most of them called Unitarians, have set an example which cannot be cried down. They have said that you can have goodness and friendship and love and God in the heart without being wholly sure as to the way it comes or in what words we shall define it all. Ask yourself if this is not so. Ask yourself if you cannot love your friend without a full explanation why. It is always rather mysterious, because God is in that love. Therefore, Unitarianism says: Let us love. Let us love with this sweet friendship. Let us have this goodness, and go about doing good, and then let us think freely about it all, and freely adopt just what explanations God gives us power to see for ourselves. Let us all unite in this search for goodness, whether our explanations quite agree or not. The Unitarians put the emphasis on goodness. To be good and to do good is the essence of it all for them.

But the older churches said that goodness was not possible for men until they had been made over, re-created. They taught that every boy and girl, every man and woman, hated God, hated goodness, and continued to hate God and goodness until they were made over by what was called conversion. They taught that we were all vicious and selfish and enemies of one another, only kept from warring on one another like devils or wild beasts by the restraint of divine anger or police authority or the church's authority. You do not hear much of that now. If men continued to believe it, they could not join together in any happy human life with each other. They would fear one another, suspect one another, denounce one another. That is just what they used to do. There is a reason why you do not hear such horrible teaching now. There is a reason why men get together more with less fear and more trust, less enmity and more love. The

reason is that a group of brave people rose up, and said that the doctrine was a hideous untruth. They affirmed that, while we all are easily tempted and led into wrong, while we are weak and blundering, and do actually fail of goodness, still the human soul, they said, does love good and really means good, and hungers for goodness, and suffers in its wrong-doing and blunders just because it is robbed of the goodness for which it hungers and thirsts. They said, Let us trust that deeper self, and obey it. Let us trust that self in one another, and join forces in making it operate its own passion for goodness. Goodness is every man's birthright: let us help remove the obstacles, let us help diminish the temptations, let us help each other to get clear judgments and strong wills. Let us all be friends together in this effort for goodness,—a goodness possible for all. You can see how such a spirit would make all men hopeful and loyal and generous and helpful, full of love for one another in spite of sins and blunders, full of forgiving love, helpful love. That is the spirit that has been leavening society, and it is the Unitarian spirit. It has helped to civilize the rest until you no longer hear much of that preaching that made the great helping and loving of man by man impossible. Unitarianism has been doing this work for the whole of society. Is it not a thing to be loyal to? Is it not a thing to help on? Is it not our chief duty to strengthen this good work by joining in it and making sacrifices for it? Jesus is a sacred name to you, and Jesus said that this love of man and love of goodness was just the heart and soul of the whole matter of religion. If you wish to be loyal to Jesus, you must be loyal to Unitarianism.

But no! say some. Religion is something more. It is being acted on by God. It is receiving goodness from God. Let sacraments operate on you. Wait for some

unusual and mysterious experience which is God's work on you. You must have communion with God. Well, Unitarians say that, too,—that we need and have communion with God. But they tell us that, when we yield our hearts up to goodness, God is acting on us. Goodness is not something which you and I create all by ourselves. It is a gift of God. We must strive for it. We must exert ourselves, but God never leaves a man to strive unaided. The goodness we love flows from his nature, and the touch of it in us is God's touch upon us. Goodness is his nature. That is what we mean by calling him Father, a God whose will is kind and loving goodness to all. And, when Unitarians say that all men really want goodness, and can be got to seek it diligently, they are saying that we are all children of that divine Father,—blundering, imperfect children, but children still, having a nature that is after the likeness of God himself. And so Unitarians say: Don't wait for anything unusual and mysterious. Just will to receive good, to do good, to love good, and then the life of God is pouring into you and through you. I know of nothing more precious and inspiring than this, nothing that can make me more happy and confident and courageous and active for good, nothing that can make me readier to reach out a hand to help my brother when he sins and falls. I cannot always give him happiness and freedom from pain and an easy life. But I can encourage him to open his life to goodness, and that is the supreme thing. There is nothing higher. It is the character of God himself. This is what Unitarianism says; and, when I open the Bible, I find Jesus saying it and living for it and dying for it. Will you be loyal to it? Will you adhere to it? Will you love the church that teaches all this hope and comfort and love and helpfulness, and the touch of God to every man?

It is all simple, you see; and then, observe, every one who tries it finds it true.

Just set about goodness, and you will find that all the laws of God work together to give it to you. Seek it, and you will find it. Seek it, and you will find yourself growing in strength, in peace, in joy. Seek it, and you will find yourself full of love and good will to others, and receiving that sweetest of joys,—the love and good will of others. Seek it, and you will find that this earth is more and more like heaven. When I think of all these facts and values of Unitarian experience, I am ashamed to ask again whether we *can* be loyal to it.

But now I mean to make a special appeal for our loyalty. *We must be loyal because so many are timid and disloyal.* An old friend of mine, reared in the same orthodox church, asked me how I had *dared* to become a Unitarian. Of course, she said, Unitarianism is the truth, and our old church is the truth mixed with error; but how did you dare? That is a sad question. The real answer I did not make, for I feared to wound. The real answer is, How does one dare not to be a Unitarian when one sees error in the other churches? The professions of religion are made before men, but are made to God. Shall we live a lie before God? There are plenty of people who ought not to be Unitarians. They do not yet see religion in this tremendous simplicity. They do not see the relations of truth and error in the old teaching. They are not thoughtful enough or discriminating enough. They have not been forced to analyze. We cannot have any blame for these our brethren and kindred. But then there are others who tell us in privacy that they are Unitarians, and yet go on supporting the old churches with concealment of their real faith. Why do they do it? It is because Unitarianism, like every new movement in re-

ligion, is unpopular and suspected. They would lose some old friends by becoming Unitarian. They would sacrifice social position or worldly advantage. They would not get elected to office or appointed to social leadership. Very often this is the case with teachers. Colleges and schools are often controlled by the older churches. Even when they are not, they want funds from rich men who are not Unitarians. So, when a man or woman is a candidate for a teaching office in such a school or college, they are asked if they belong to this unpopular group of Unitarians; and a confession will deprive them of their livelihood.

This makes many to conceal their real faith, and pretend to believe what they do not believe. It is not for us to sit in judgment on them, though we must condemn their act. All that we need to do and ought to do is to think for a moment what would become of the religion of Jesus if all men did like that,—pretend to believe what they regarded as false. In a moment we should see that the whole world would be full of hypocrisy and deceit, and that goodness would not have a chance with us. I honestly believe that there is not a large community in our country which is not corroded and made vicious by this deceit in religion. Goodness and happiness are thwarted by it. It kills earnestness and sincerity. It keeps out the life of God from the life of man. Therefore we have a special duty of loyalty for the sake of social health and for the salvation of those who fall victim to this terrible temptation of dishonesty in religion. We must strengthen the church which maintains the pure and simple truth, in order that the timid may be encouraged to get rid of the evil of their timidity. If it costs another man something to avow his Unitarianism, that is a compelling reason why we should be bold and

faithful, why we should ally ourselves with it, and attend its meetings and do its work. That is the way to love him — to be true for his sake and his encouragement. If we love the religion of Jesus, if we love the moral welfare of mankind, if we love the man who sins in any way and in the confusions of the old doctrines fails to see that God and goodness are there for the asking and the seeking, then we who see religion in this pure simplicity of Unitarianism are sinning against God and man unless we speak and act with the spirit of the Psalmist, who said: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

There is another special reason why we should be faithful,— faithful in attending our church, faithful in living its life, faithful in confessing our faith. All over our land there are multitudes who live without any church. They no longer believe the old versions of religion. Those versions have become unreal to them. Their lives are lonely and unhelped. When they sin, they know no reassurance of divine love. They do not know that, when they seek goodness, they are meeting God. They do not know that the strength of God co-operates with them. They become discouraged and weak. They do not have the great incentive and joy of knowing that they are children of God and akin to his nature. They conceive themselves as alien to his nature and his sympathy. They become careless or they suffer, and in distress and death they have not a comforting faith in God. Whenever they discover a Unitarian church and its simplicity of religion, their hearts leap up. They discover that they are religious people after all, that there is a divine care for them, that there is strength and hope and comfort for

them. They discover that just in their daily life and common experience they are acting with God, and then they know that they are sure to triumph over wrong and evil, and that death can be no tragedy for them.

Think how our whole land might be raised to a high pitch of energy in the good life — how much fuller of the blessed friendship that goodness means — how fuller of joy and hope,—if only all these multitudes of the unchurched could know of the simple gospel that we enjoy. For them let us be loyal. For them let us build up our church. Deep and strong within us is the passion for humanity. Let that passion sustain itself by the words of the blessed Jesus: “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” It took a long time for Christianity to overcome the old pagan way in religion; but at last the whole society was Christian. It took a long time to see that the purer Christianity was in the experience of faith, and not in priestly ritual. We honor those who risked all to support the truth when it was unpopular. We think with regret for those who failed to see the truth, with pity for those who hung back through fear of men. It is taking time to persuade men that Christianity is just this simple gospel of ours. It will come. It will come. We see the good time coming.

May no one look back on us with pity that we were not brave or faithful! May no one use to us that keen reproach of the French king to the soldier who came too late for the battle: “Hang yourself, brave Crillon! We fought at Arques, and you were not there.”

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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THE PASSING OF CALVINISM

BY

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THE PASSING OF CALVINISM

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.—PSALM ciii. 17.

One of the signs of the times that has received frequent notice in the daily journals is the great increase of liberal thought within the pale of the orthodox churches. The emphatic statements of the pastor of the Old South Church in Boston, Dr. Gordon, that Calvinism has passed away, and that belief in eternal punishment is practical atheism; the advanced views on the Bible published by Dr. McGiffert of the Presbyterian Church and Dr. Bacon of the Congregational; and the departure of Dr. Briggs to the Episcopalian ranks rather than surrender any of his progressive theories of the composition and inspiration of the Scriptures; the position taken by leading champions of the Nicene Creed, that its strong expressions concerning Christ—"God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God"—are simply exalted statements of theism and ethics, applicable not merely to one man, but to the human race; or the

way in which leading Congregationalists now explain their New Orthodoxy so as to make it practically identical with the old-fashioned Unitarianism of Channing and Dewey,—when, I say, we recall the many instances of the crumbling of the old systems of theology that a hundred years ago so weighed on human thought, we are apt to think the great campaign for liberal religion is already won. Our ideas, we believe, are working and are proclaimed in so many other denominations that we are tempted to feel that our special mission and call are passing away. There is (we flatter ourselves) or soon will be (we flatter ourselves) little difference between the sects. Why need we labor with the oar, when the current of universal thought is doing our work for us on all sides?

But, if ever I have been tempted to think thus, I have soon been rudely awakened from my complacency by running across some well-preserved and active specimen of the old-time theology in my immediate neighborhood. And, when I have carried my survey beyond the few advanced pickets and scouts of the great popular churches (men whose very exceptional position has given them public prominence), when I have turned to note the intellectual state and doctrinal standing of the great masses behind them, I have almost always seen

that those masses and their more authoritative spokesmen have not moved forward by any means nearly so much as is fancied. The theologic breastworks of the sixteenth or seventeenth century may have crumbled a little, but their frowning walls still darken the horizon and hem in the reason. The popular creeds are like the cut granite fortifications that our grandfathers built with such labor, massive to look at, but palpable anachronisms,—quite unable to defend themselves against modern cannonading. And yet to remove them costs so much money and ammunition that they are generally left to themselves for the slow chisel of time to sap and mine them till they are transformed to the ruins to which they are already predestined. Occasionally, however, they do not understand their own destiny, and begin actively to belch and bombard, and remind the public of the terror and devastation they used to deal all around them in earlier time.

Some of my listeners, perhaps, may have lately received, as I have, shot and shell from one of these antiquated batteries. It was sent to me in the form of a pamphlet containing what, I judge, is the published form of a sermon, given in this town by a minister who is a very prominent representative of his denomination. The title of the pamphlet is "The Precious Blood of

Christ." It contains numerous and dire threatenings of the damnation of hell to all who do not accept this redemption-price of Christ's blood, after the theory of this minister; and I fancy it was thought that I was one who needed to be especially warned to flee betimes from the wrath to come.

This belated echo of Jonathan Edwards begins by telling us how "the blood-lines run through the Bible as the threads of gold through a piece of cloth of gold." "Should you take a little camel's-hair brush," says this sixteenth-century preacher, to whom our noble nineteenth century has been able to supply but little of its more merciful and rational spirit, "and dip it into red ink, and pass it lightly over every text in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation which refers to the blood," either in the Old or New Testament, and then pass it over all the promises and expectations of God's people which are based upon the covenant of redemption, you would be amazed to find how red your Bible would appear. Then, should you take a sharp knife and cut out of your Bible all those crimsoned passages, and, having done so, hold it up before your eyes, you would be amazed to find what a ragged and fragmentary Bible you would have left. There would be no word of peace or grace to a sinner in it, no promise of forgiveness, no justification, no regeneration, no purging of

the conscience, no hope of heaven, no song of redemption, no immortality. Nothing would be left but a few records of Jewish wars and a few precepts for the life that now is. "The blood of Christ is precious," says this zealous emulator of Jonathan Edwards, "because it is the sinner's only salvation. Jesus Christ, the crucified, stands between you and the eternal burnings. If you miss him, if you reject him, oh, then, God pity you, you are a hopelessly lost one; and in hell you will soon lift up your eyes, being in torment." The suffering of the damned, we are also told several times, "is not a temporary one, but an eternal one"; "No man can save or redeem himself. No man can redeem another, for the reason that all are involved in this dreadful curse.

"Jesus Christ, by being made sin for us has redeemed us from the curse of the law, and reconciled us to God by his cross." Jesus (it is claimed, with a cruelty and irrationality only to be explained by the logical exigencies of a vicious creed) suffered for us,—the just for the unjust,—not alone the outward penalties, but the inward soul-agony of the damned, by reason of the curse of the law and the wrath of God." (p. 33.) "He gave him to death; and to what a death! Not simply to the physical sufferings of the cross, but the soul, suffering under the holy hand of God, dealing out

divine wrath upon him,—a death that was consummated by pouring out the curse of the law upon his soul; for it was God himself, as the moral governor of the universe, who awoke the sword and smote the shepherd.”

Thus says our preacher. After such a caricature of a moral governor of the universe and a heavenly Father and such a gratuitous addition to the gospel record, it is not strange that the preacher again intimates that those who do not accept his theory of this blood-redemption “are turned into hell with the nations that forget God.” The possession or absence of a single sulphur match, he would have us think, may determine whether a young man may have a chance of eternal heaven or go at once to everlasting torment.

I have quoted now, I fancy, quite enough of this “Precious Blood” sermon to show that there is still enough theological benightedness and dogmatic rigor existing right about us to make it worth while for Unitarians to continue their work a little longer.

In theological instruction as in all other teaching there is needed more than single demonstrations. There is needed line upon line and precept upon precept. And so I shall venture to thresh again this old straw (as to some it may seem), but a straw containing most precious grain of truth;

namely, the real efficacy of Christ's blood for humanity and the error and truth in the popular doctrines of atonement and future punishment.

In the first place, does the doctrine of blood salvation characterize the most of the Bible? If we take out these crimsoned passages, have we little of value left in the Bible?

He who maintains this shows great ignorance of the Bible or a very perverted sense of what is of value in it.

The blood-lines in the Old Testament are rarely to be found outside the priestly sections of the so-called books of Moses and the historical books. The Psalms and the Proverbs, Job (that most spiritual book of the Old Testament), and the lofty counsels of the Prophets are pretty nearly free from these crimson passages. In the noblest passages of the prophetic books these blood sacrifices and their assumed efficacy are most positively denounced and repudiated.

"Though ye offer me burnt-offerings and meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. . . . But let judgment roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream" (Amos v. 22-24).

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord:

I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand? When ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." (Isaiah i. 11, 12, 15-18.)

It was after such vigorous fashion that Isaiah and Micah, Amos and Hosea, repudiated these vain attempts to purchase moral purity by offerings of blood.

And in the New Testament, likewise, it is to the later and less authoritative, less valuable parts, such as the anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews (not written by any apostle), to the so-called Epistle of Peter, a late and unapostolic writing, composed seventy or more years after Christ's death, or else to the Revelation, another book of obscure meaning, and, in the judgment of the best scholars, not written by an apostle, that the champions of this blood-redemption doctrine have to resort for texts.

In the Epistle of James and the Acts of the Apostles this doctrine of vicarious atonement does not appear, but salvation is conditioned simply on the clean and unselfish life. Peter's broad proclamation in his earliest publication of the Gospel is, "In every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts x. 35).

In that earliest and most authentic account of Christ's preaching, the Sermon on the Mount, there is not a lisping of this blood-redemption to be heard. The beatitudes know nothing about it.

The Gospels of Mark and Luke, the oldest and most authentic portions of the gospel history, do not teach it. The Gospels of John and Matthew, except in two or three controverted passages, contain no corroboration of it.

In the face of this nearly unanimous testimony of the oldest and most authentic presentations of the teachings of Jesus and the twelve, what shall be thought of the recklessness of statement of one who can say that, when the passages crimsoned by this blood-doctrine are taken out of the Bible, "nothing would be left but a few records of Jewish wars and a few precepts for the life that now is"?

Every thorough student of the words of Jesus knows how broad and spiritual and

free from any taint of the moral poison of vicariousness is his teaching in regard to forgiveness and salvation.

Christ's beatitudes are not promised to those who hide beneath his blood, but to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who make peace, who are pure in heart.

The young man who asked what he should do to enter into eternal life was not told to accept Christ as a ransom, but to "keep the commandments": do no murder not commit adultery, not steal nor bear false witness, love his neighbor as himself, and devote his possessions to helping his kind (Matt. xix. 16-21).

When the sinful woman washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, the Master required not any faith in his substitutional sufferings as the condition of her pardon, but the sight of her contrition and new opened affections was enough. "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." And in a similar way, in his parable of the lost sheep, Christ speaks of the joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, and limits it not by any expiatory or vicarious conditions.

Again, recall the parable of the Last Judgment, in which Jesus expressly indicates the two classes of goats and sheep,—one to be shut out of the blessedness of

heaven, the other admitted. Who are the ones set on the right hand, to enter into the joy of the Lord? Does the judge say, "Come unto me, ye who have believed in my blood, who have purchased redemption by substituted righteousness"? Not at all; but it is those who had fed the hungry and clothed the naked and visited those sick and in prison, suspecting not that thereby they had been serving the Lord, who are welcomed to share his blessedness. Those who are to be cast out into outer darkness are not those who failed in belief or ritual, but the Pharisees and hypocrites, whose cold and selfish lives discounted all their pious professions (Matt. xxv. 31-46).

Or take another of Christ's teachings, where he dealt directly with this question of forgiveness of sin,—the parable of the Prodigal Son. If Jesus had held that there was no pardon for sinners except by his atoning blood and substituted suffering, could he have omitted all allusion to it in this parable? Would it have ever ended as it does, by the father's freely forgiving the prodigal son, simply on the ground of his penitence? Nay, in that case would it not have read rather like this? Would not any orthodox theologian, had he composed it, have made it close after this fashion? "And, when the father saw his son a great way off, he frowned on him, and hid his face, and said,

Thou hast transgressed my commandments. Thy sin is unpardonable by thyself; and he called to his servant to drive him out, and push him into the burning pit near by. But the elder son, filled with pity, cried, Pour out upon me, O father, thy wrath. Let my blood flow and my brother be forgiven. And so the father, with his own hand, scourged the good son till he died; and then he opened his arms to the prodigal, saying: Now my wrath is appeased, my justice satisfied. This atoning blood allows my mercy at length to forgive you and receive you into my home."

Who, except a creed-blinded theologian, would ever fancy such a version an improvement on the gospel parable? And yet it is just such emendation that it must have to bring it into any harmony with the orthodox creeds.

The advocates of this blood-redemption lay great stress on the two phrases in Matthew, "a ransom for many" (xx. 28) and "blood of the new covenant, shed for many for the remission of sins" (xxvi. 28).

But the phrase about the ransom is regarded by some of the best Biblical critics as an interpolation; and the second phrase, "blood of the new covenant, shed for many for the remission of sins," drawn as its imagery is from the offering of the Paschal lamb, necessitates no vicarious significance,

inasmuch as the passover offering was never regarded as a sin offering, but as an offering of thanksgiving.

"The Paschal Lamb," as that great New Testament authority, Keim, says, "was no atoning sacrifice at all, in a strict sense."

Other advocates of the vicarious atonement insist vehemently upon the texts in Paul and Hebrews that seem to countenance it. But, in the first place, the best scholars are doubtful that these expressions mean any more than that, in the view of these writers, Christ's death suspended for good the whole Mosaic law of sacrifice, or that Jesus' sufferings have or will reconcile man to God. There is no good ground to interpret them to mean that quite different thing, that God was reconciled to man, when otherwise he would have been merciless, or that Christ's sufferings were a substituted punishment or a debt of moral penalty, paid to God. And yet just this is what is needed to maintain the doctrine of vicarious atonement.

Even if it be granted that the authority of Paul and the unknown author of the Hebrews supports this doctrine, of what weight is the theory of these writers, in comparison with the positive declarations of Jesus to the opposite, freely offering forgiveness to the repentant without any demand of substituted penalty? How strange,

how irreverent, this contempt of the theologians for the direct words of the Christ (who, they assure us, was God the Son), and the elevation above them of the opinions of writers in regard to whom we have no evidence that they ever listened to the preaching of the Master!

This theory of vicarious redemption has, then, no adequate Scripture basis. Neither is it consistent with itself, reason, or morality. Money debts, to be sure, can be paid by one person for another, but moral debts never. Moral guilt is something personal, and never can be transferred to another. If an innocent person be punished in place of a criminal, that does not lessen the guilt of the criminal. Rather does it aggravate the evil he has done, and his ill-desert; and instead of specially fitting him for pardon it invites the natural sense of justice to follow him with severer condemnation. Righteousness and purity are things that we must win and possess in our own hearts. They are never to be put upon a man from without, like clothes or riches. And, if the guilt is not removed, the righteousness be not attained, how is salvation, in any true sense, possible? Goats are not turned into sheep by sprinkling them with water; nor are the mean and cruel and selfish turned into saints by having some ecclesiastical formula recited over them or saying, "I believe."

Spiritual blessedness is only to be felt by the pure conscience: the guilty can never enjoy it. For heaven, when we understand it aright, is not a place that magically confers its happiness upon any soul, however foul, that may get passed in under cover of another's virtue; but it is the kingdom within us. The thing to do is not for us to get ourselves into heaven, but heaven into us. If we have this heavenly holiness in our souls, we need no righteousness of another to be transferred to us. If we have it not, then we are in no state to receive salvation; and the atonement scheme would be ineffectual.

Again, its theory offends reason and conscience more violently still in the view that it gives of God and Christ. A fundamental element of the theory is that of a conflict between the attributes of God. The justice of the Father demanded the punishment of men, and divine mercy called for their pardon. The two opposing attributes were in a deadlock from the first creation of man for four thousand years down to the Christian era, when the Son was called in, to get the divine attributes out of their difficulties by some manœuvre or other.

And what is the expedient supposed? Why, that, though the Father's justice and veracity is pledged to the proclamation of

punishments against transgressors, he is content to vent it on goodness the most perfect! What a deplorable reflection of human artifice is this!

Strange justice and strange veracity, indeed, that cares not on whom punishment descends, so long as some one suffers, that demands obedience to a perfect moral law, yet provides a scheme of escape which violates all moral principles! A justice which cannot forgive man for the humblest penitence, the most sincere reform, the deepest remorse and thorough reparation, but must have, as the bloody price of his pardon, the suicide of his own divine Son!

And how full of irrationalities and inconsistencies is this famous stratagem of the Trinity, by which the difficulties that the Creator of man had got into were circumvented! For, if in the mind of God the Father, as we are told, there was a conflict between the attributes of justice and mercy, then in the Son, who was also very God, there must have been the same conflict. Otherwise God the Son must have been lacking in an equal endowment of justice, which cannot honorably, we are told, overlook man's guilt. Or if, while the Son's mercy was equal to satisfying the demands of his justice, the Father's mercy was not equal, then God the Father must have been deficient in mercy, the noblest

of the divine attributes; and the Father could not have been completely God.

If the honor of God did not allow him to pardon the guilty, how could that honor allow him to do far worse,—punish the innocent? If the justice of the Father required satisfaction from a third party, then the justice of the Son must have been equally delicate, and demanded a vicarious penalty from another divine person, say the mercy of the Holy Spirit; and the justice of the Holy Spirit must again be placated vicariously by some farther member of the divine company, and so on *ad infinitum*. Logically, this substitution should go on in an endless series. If the rest of the series be remitted, why may not all? It is a *reductio ad absurdum*, a deadlock simply in the thoughts of theologians, and resolved simply by recognizing the fact that, whatever the demands of divine justice, even if they be infinite, they are perfectly met by the equally infinite love of God. And the fiction of a suffering God is simply a device of the crude imagination of theologians to make men realize that the mercy of God always matches his justice and righteousness.

Especially odious in this blood-redemption theory is the hard and cruel aspect it ascribes to the heavenly Father.

In this belated echo of Jonathan Ed-

wards, which has essayed to send a gruesome thrill through this community, the heavenly Father is represented as dealing out divine wrath on Christ, and inflicting on his innocent soul "the inward soul-agonies of the damned" (p. 33). Those are the very words used. Such a travesty of all right and mercy does not satisfy justice. It is what utterly dissatisfies justice and violates all moral law.

What a merciless tyrant does this view make of the heavenly Father! No wonder that millions of Christians have turned away from him to the worship of Jesus; no wonder that they have really been obliged to make a God for themselves out of that tender, loving spirit, after false theology had robbed the only living and true God of that divine goodness which they might honestly adore!

Who is there among us who could respect himself, who could feel himself otherwise than unjust and contemptible, if he exacted, knowingly, from an innocent volunteer, penalty that was due from the guilty?

Who is there, among those that deserve to be called Christians, who, if one who had wronged him implored in true penitence his pardon and made all the reparation in his power, and proceeded to conduct himself as his sincere friend and loyal, obedient servant, would not forgive this penitent,

suing for mercy? Shall we think God less honorable in his administration of justice, less merciful and easy to be entreated, than a decent man?

Nay, looking at the other side of the transaction, the willingness of any self-respecting man to escape his due punishment by allowing an innocent friend to shoulder it for him,—shall the man or woman who claims to have become a consecrated religious life be meaner than any respectable heathen?

Rightly did that noble soul,—the founder of our great system of common schools,—Horace Mann, say that, if he were to accept the orthodox conditions of salvation and enter heaven by virtue of another's merits and sufferings, "he should be eternally ashamed to look Christ in the face."

Think of a Christian, who claims to be an imitator of Jesus, congratulating himself that he has paid his defaulted debt through a friend's loss, and escaped scot-free from chastisement by shouldering it on an innocent substitute! What bespeaks blacker selfishness, cowardice, and lack of honor than that? Is not such doctrine plainly demoralizing and accountable for the fact, acknowledged by eminent orthodox ministers, that we have in the popular churches so many small-souled and slippery saints, who confidently read their title clear to

mansions in the sky, but can hardly get trusted for a pound of meat or a ton of coal on earth? Prof. Momerie, a distinguished scholar of the Church of England, roundly declares that the doctrine of imputed righteousness (which is as much a contradiction in terms as imputed health) cannot fail to lead, and has actually led, to the most disastrous moral results. It was this doctrine (as the reformers themselves afterward admitted) that was responsible for the vice and dissolution of morals that followed the Lutheran Reformation.

How can it be otherwise, when individual righteousness is sneered at as filthy rags, the Sermon on the Mount depreciated as "mere morality," and men taught that they are to be saved, not by making themselves worth saving, but by Christ's substituted sufferings?

To our orthodox champions, I fear, these arguments from logic, from morals, from common sense, from humanity, are of minor importance. Whenever I read these sermons and arguments, I meet another appeal which always appears to them paramount. It is the appeal of fear. And so I was not surprised when, among the other echoes of Jonathan Edwards that rumble through the recent effort to revive the Northampton preacher's lurid pulpit pyrotechnics, there were found several reminders that, "unless

you avail yourselves of the precious blood of Christ, you will follow Dives into the tormenting flame." "Should you die to-day, you would sink into hell, as a stone sinks when hurled into the sea." To those who think this blood-doctrine smacks of the shambles and dishonors God, it is thought to be a *coup de grâce* to tell them that they will never get into "the blood-washed throng" about the throne, but will "suffer a far sorer punishment than those who despised Moses' law and died without mercy."

Well, this lurid threat, with all its picturesque hints of red fire, I confess fails to excite any thrill of dread within me. And, I fear, it will not excite any in the rest of those who regard the doctrine of vicarious atonement as doing violence to our reason and our sense of justice. For, if only those can enter heaven who accept this substitute salvation, the company there will hardly be of the best or highest quality.

The ablest thinkers in the Episcopal, Congregational, and English Church—men such as Phillips Brooks, Dean Stanley, Canon Farrar, Lyman Abbott, Washington Gladden, Ian Maclaren, and George MacDonald—will not be there. Milton and Locke and Newton, Tennyson and Browning, will not be there. Florence Nightingale, Emerson, Whittier, Lowell, and

Holmes, Channing, Parker, Sumner, and almost all the leading thinkers, poets, reformers, and philanthropists of the nineteenth century, will not be there, but somewhere else. Call that some whereelse hell, if you wish. At any rate, it will be a much more attractive place, with nobler thought and loftier moral ideals and sweeter humanity than that place which the blood-washed throng congratulate themselves they have got into, under the cover of another's merits. And I fancy, also, as the honest Methodist, Father Taylor, said, when the bigots of Boston consigned Emerson and Parker to a similar exile, that, when these good men get there, "the temperature will be quite ameliorated, and "the current of emigration soon turn that way."

No, these old threats of damnation have lost their power. The better hearts of our generation have risen above the inhumanity of spirit, the narrowness of outlook, and the fogginess of thought that credited them; and they have dropped down into the rhetorical artifices of those who would take advantage of the slumbering superstitions of the more ignorant and bigoted.

How incredible have the implied premises and even the very terms of this cruel doctrine become!

Punishment for eternity!

Eternity! Think what it means. Think

of the millions of years during which our earth was being fitted up for man, the trillions of centuries during which our solar system was condensing from the primitive nebula to the grand galaxies and planets of to-day, and then of those misty cloud-specks, each a stellar constellation, the very light from which takes thousands of years to reach us; go back to the birth-hour of these oldest stars,—and yet you have not crossed in thought the threshold of infinite time: the clock of eternity has not ticked once. Nevertheless, through all this unspeakable, uncalculable duration, God will continue, we are told, to torment immortal souls,—souls whose ethereal spirit-essence can wear out solar systems, as a man wears out clothes.

And all for what? Not to reform the soul or purify him or bring him back to God and heavenly blessedness, but just to punish him, to satisfy God's wrath and justice. What a monstrous idea! how inhuman and contradictory to all rational conceptions of punishment, whose sole justification and end is to supply remedy to evil! If it does not, it is useless, fiendish revenge.

And for what kinds of sins is this eternal torment assigned? Because one man perhaps has been too enlightened to believe in an immoral doctrinal scheme, and another too conscientious to say he accepts an irra-

tional creed which his reason rejects, or a third, perhaps, in youthful thoughtlessness, has never given any serious attention at all to his soul or religious things. And, when death stares him in the face, his entrance to heaven or condemnation to hell depends, we are told, on the presence or absence of a single match.

Mayhap, in all these cases the soul was not yet fitted for heavenly blessedness.

For that, much greater intelligence, charity, moral insight, fulness of love and sympathy than most men show, is needed. The purest earthly saint is but a babe in heavenly knowledge and affection. But to shut up a soul's whole future to two direct alternatives—eternal heaven or eternal hell, the choice hanging on a match, burning or going out—is a most crude limitation of God's opportunities of spiritual development. Nothing between heaven and hell for an unripe soul, however green or raw or inexperienced! This is no more in accordance with God's wondrous patience in developing human souls, and with that myriad of grades and distinctions in God's universe, and that delicate adjustment of moral reward to moral condition, however fine the shadings, than it is in accordance with the Scripture assurances that "in the Father's house are many mansions," that, "where sin abounded, grace did much more

abound," and the promise of a universal reign of Christ who would subdue all things unto himself, and then deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that "God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 25, 28).

No, the doctrine of eternal torment is no longer credible to any humane heart. Suppose an earthly parent should make it a rule to immure in a dungeon for the rest of his life each one of his babes that did anything naughty or displeasing in the first twelve months of his life. What a monster we should call him! But what far greater injustice, what still more unspeakable cruelty, for God to condition the soul's eternal happiness or misery, without possibility of alteration, on his behavior or theological belief in this infinitesimal span of our earthly life,—so much briefer still, comparatively!

No, friends, do not attribute to God any such hardness of heart as to think that, whatever place of purging or discipline God may have in which to complete the soul's purification, that place or state is walled up without exit, or that heaven's door is to be shut without a knocker, hermetically closed against all belated penitents. Confide in the cheering truth that God tolerates not useless and endless tortures of any soul, but delights in the continuous efforts of all angels and saints to

reform those whom the influences of earth failed to redeem, and that his providence in the hereafter shall be far more potent to save even than it is here,—yes, be able at length, in the course of the vast æons of eternity, to redeem and bring to blessedness and peace every soul that continues to exist.

If there be no chance of this, for what purpose is the soul kept alive? Why should it be kept in existence? As an all-loving God must desire to save all his children, so, we may be sure, an all-wise and omnipotent God must be able, sometime and somewhere, in the infinite opportunities of eternity, to carry out his beneficent desires. Otherwise the rebellious spirits are more powerful than both the angelic host and the power of God himself.

This is the good news of Christianity. In spite of that tyranny of isolated texts, whose gloom our orthodox champions would spread all through the Scriptures and over both this life and the next, the great revelation of the gospel is that God is a heavenly Father, a God of love, of victorious, universal, and endless love. That love is not conditioned on the artificial tests of denominational creeds. It is no scanty and petty measure, limited to the ephemeral period of human life. It is as all-embracing as eternal, as generous, as God's own sun

shine. "For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good,"—to love them all, even the evil into righteousness. And even, "if I make my bed in hell, behold! thou art there." Yes, thou art there, O Father, with that mercy that is from everlasting to everlasting.

In conclusion, let us return for a few moments to that doctrine of the Precious Blood with which we had to deal earlier.

The orthodox doctrine, we found, is neither in harmony with Scripture, reason, nor the moral sense. But has that blood no preciousness, no worthy lesson?

Yes. Take the natural and historic view, and that out-poured life-stream from the side of the crucified Jesus is shown to be more precious, more inspiring, than those fancy who use it as a plaster under which to steal an unearned crown of bliss by the merits of another's sacrifice. The inestimable value of Christ's cross lies in the righteousness it has quickened, even in the erring, and that faithfulness to duty and truth, even at the cost of life, with which it has inspired so many martyrs and reformers.

The true atonement is the at-one-ment; *i.e.*, the reconciliation, not of God to man (for his constant love and pity need no increase), but the reconciliation of the sinning man to the divine love that ever seeks it. The one condition is sincere penitence and

earnest efforts at leading a better life. When once a man with his whole heart seeks to fulfil God's laws, then he has peace within. All God's forces are working with him and for him; and heaven's own atmosphere generates itself daily within his soul. There may be ugly scars in the man's past,—scars that for a long time will not heal, that never will be quite effaced; but he who humbly bears them as reminders to save him from spiritual pride may convert even these into spiritual helps and blessings.

This is, then, the path of salvation,—to turn from evil, to do good, to draw near to God, and smile in his smile and love in his love.

And now if we ask, What can win our reluctant natures to this? we see at once the significance of Christ to the religious life.

It is the work of Jesus, not only by his death, but by that whole consecrated life of which his death was but the culmination, to arouse within men the new spirit of loyal sonship to God.

It is Christ who assures us that God is indeed a Father, that there is not and never has been any wrath in his countenance, that his desire is ever to lift up the fallen and embrace with joy every repentant, home-turning prodigal. It is Christ who by his inspiring life attracts us to the love of holi-

ness. It is Christ who by his tragic death has most impressively exhibited the evil of sin and the inexhaustible love of the good toward even the worst. God, as Christ, looking on the stained image of the soul, sees us, not as we are, but as we may be in some better day.

The cross is thus the majestic symbol of heavenly purity and divine love. It is the touching incentive to more faithful service of God. It is the most animating encouragement to all tempted or struggling virtue, the loftiest appeal to self-sacrifice; and it is thus by its unparalleled quickening and diffusion of a regenerated life that the blood out-poured on Golgotha brings remission of sins to so many, because it causes the very cessation of sins.

There, as Dr. Heber Newton has said, on those hills of Palestine walked one "who breathed into humanity a sense of sacredness in all life, and made men thrill with awe to feel God near in common things." There walked one who touched the "soul of man that it can no more go asleep, but with wide-opened eyes now walks the earth beneath the encompassing presence of the infinite divine." From him has gone forth a renovating power, which has covered the face of the civilized world, and spreads daily toward the ends of the earth; and the work that it is working is the spiritual

transformation of men into that heavenly image with which God's pardon and heaven's blessedness are inseparably bound up.

In this saving work, Jesus stands pre-eminent. But he does not stand alone. His grand work would have missed its aim, had it not brought into union with him, as he with them, the noble army of apostles, preachers, reformers, saints, and martyrs who form the saving salt of the world. The difference between the sacrifice of Christ and that of other men is not one of kind, but simply of degree. Each obscure human life that by disinterested devotion climbs up into life hid with Christ in God also puts away some bit of sin by the sacrifice of self. No divine redemption has ever been achieved but through some precious sacrifice; and, conversely, no strong soul has ever offered up itself on the tragic altar of human progress without saving some erring brother and making atonement in smaller or greater measure for the sins of that social organism to which (for weal or woe) we are bound. Love is always sacrificial. It gives itself to redeem its loved ones. It cannot keep out of the sorrow, the suffering, the shame, of those whose every tear is as its own.

It is to this spiritual atonement that we are all summoned.

The only key needed for this gate is a contrite spirit, a helpful and loving heart, and the obedient feet that will walk faithfully in the path Christ has shown us, however thorny be that path, whatever cross stands waiting for us there.

Its blessing is no private privilege, no exclusive monopoly. It grows by what it gives; and, the more it pours out, the more it has.

APPENDIX

Among the representative theologians and preachers who have belonged or still belong to its fellowship in America are such names as William Ellery Channing, James Freeman Clarke, Orville Dewey, Henry W. Bellows, Theodore Parker, Starr King, Frederic H. Hedge, Edward Everett Hale, Robert Collyer, William H. Furness, Andrew P. Peabody, Charles Carroll Everett, and Minot J. Savage.

Among philanthropists: Joseph Tuckerman, Samuel G. Howe, Dorothea Dix, Peter Cooper, Samuel J. May, Henry Bergh, Abbott Lawrence, Enoch Pratt, Mary A. Livermore, Clara Barton.

Among educators and academic leaders: Presidents James Walker, C. C. Felton, Thomas Hill, and Charles W. Eliot of Harvard; President Horace Mann of Antioch College; Jonas G. Clark, the founder, and G. Stanley Hall, president of Clark University; Chancellor William G. Eliot of St. Louis University; Profs. George R. Noyes, Ezra Abbot, Francis G. Peabody, Francis J. Child, James K. Hosmer.

Among our poets: Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Whittier (Unitarian).

Quaker), Julia Ward Howe, Helen Hunt, and Celia Thaxter.

Among historians: Bancroft, Motley, Prescott, Sparks, Palfrey, Parkman, George E. Ellis, and John Fiske.

Among the scientists: Nathaniel Bowditch, Louis Agassiz, Benjamin Peirce, Maria Mitchell, Prof. Draper.

Among literary men and women: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edwin P. Whipple, Sylvester Judd, Henry Thoreau, Thomas W. Higginson, Parke Godwin, Moncure D. Conway, William R. Alger, Christopher P. Cranch, Edward Atkinson, Margaret Fuller, Lydia Maria Child, Louisa M. Alcott, Catharine Sedgwick.

Among statesmen and public men: Presidents Jefferson, John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and Fillmore; Chief Justice Marshall and Judges Joseph Story, Wayne, and Miller of the Supreme Court; Edward Everett, Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, Josiah Quincy, Charles Sumner, George William Curtis, Dorman B. Eaton, George W. McCrary; Govs. John A. Andrew, Boutwell, Talbot, Long, Greenhalge, and Wolcott of Massachusetts; Senator George F. Hoar and Judge E. Rockwood Hoar.

Among English Unitarians the following names are those of men and women eminent in their respective fields of service: John Milton, John Locke, Isaac Newton, Joseph

Priestley, James Martineau, Sir John Bowring, Prof. Davidson, W. B. Carpenter and Estlin Carpenter, Florence Nightingale, Mary Carpenter, Mrs. Humphry Ward, and Stopford A. Brooke. To these may be added the names of the following distinguished men on the Continent who have held or still hold our faith: Mazzini, Castelar, Kossuth, Albert Réville, Athanase Coquerel, Kuenen, Schenkel, Carl Hase.

Is not a faith that has received the adherence of so many of the first minds of the age worth inquiring into?

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[No. 202]

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APR 12 1917

THE REAL PRESENCE OF THE LIVING GOD

BY

REV. EDWARD EVERETT HALE, D.D.

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Individuals desiring to co-operate with this Association may receive a certificate of Associate Membership by signing an application card (sent on request to the Associate Department) and the payment of one dollar. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum ofdollars, the principal to be securely invested and the income to be used to promote the work of the Association.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS LIBRARY
APR 12 1917

THE REAL PRESENCE OF THE LIVING GOD.

"The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed."—GEN. ii. 8.

"And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you."—GEN. ix. 9.

THE record of the first American Thanksgiving is in a letter ascribed to George Morton, written at Plymouth on the 11th of December, 1621. "Our Harvest being gotten in, Governor Bradford sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labour. They four in one day collected as much fowl as with a little help beside served the company almost a week."

It is worth noting that Massasoit came in with "some ninety Indians who for three days were entertained and feasted, for which purpose he brought in five deer." It has been thought worthy of note by our local historians that the recent discovery of Governor Bradford's Journal shows that turkeys are among the fowl brought in by these sportsmen.

The first Thanksgiving Day in Boston was February, 1631. This is the Thanksgiving of which the record is that a day of fasting had been appointed, and that, on the arrival of Mr. Pierce with his ship "Lion," the governor changed the day of fasting to be kept as a day of thanksgiving, on the 22d of Feb-

ruary. The "Lion" had been laden with provisions bought by Winthrop's advice at great charge in England, in a year which was almost a year of famine; and her stores of wheat meal, peas, oat meal, beef and pork, cheese, butter, and suet, were distributed by the governor unto his six hundred people "according to their necessities."

There was, of course, no danger that in either colony people were starving, with the fish in the harbor, with the game on shore, and the wild geese and turkeys in the skies, and the oysters and clams in the beaches. There never was any danger of starvation in New England.

But these "godly men" were *godly* men. They would not accept physical comfort or luxury without thanking the God of comfort and luxury. It might be that they thanked God because the "Lion" arrived on the right day. It might be because the Bay had yielded store of halibut and the stream stores of salmon; but they did not think that they made the halibut or the salmon, or that their winds had brought the "Lion" to her harbor. They knew that Pierce in the "Lion" had been a fellow-worker with God when he trimmed his sails or stood at the helm at midnight. They knew that Massasoit had been a fellow-worker with God when he shot the deer which he brought in as his tribute to the thanksgiving festival. God had bidden the deer range in the woods. Yes! And the deer was ready for Massasoit's flint arrow. God had bidden the wind to blow! Yes! And the wind was ready for Pierce's topsail and mainsail. Was it a million years ago that God had provided for the deer and the wind, or is it now that he provides for the deer and the wind? This is all one to those

who appoint the Thanksgiving. They know that God is the present God,—I AM that I AM! To him there is no time, or to him, if you please to split hairs in using words, time is eternity. To God we owe the Thanksgiving: to God we owe the “Lion” and the arrival of the “Lion.” “My Father worketh hitherto; and I work.” And, because we are godly men, we thank God, and we make a special Thanksgiving Day, when we eat from the table which is spread or when we welcome our wives and our children as they step from the ship’s gangway on her arrival. For, as godly men, we live and move and have our being in our God.

For these godly men know and remember what their children are too apt to forget, that every blessing comes to us in this divine world which is so human because we men and women are the living children of the living God. He creates, and we create. We plant, and he waters. He teaches the winds to blow and the rivers to flow, and we use the wind for our mainsail and the river for our turbine.

In the dark ages of history men did not understand this: they did not even know it. In the dark ages of history—call them what you will, pagan or heathen or worldly or calvinistic—you do not know that God is our Father. For in these dark ages men are afraid of God. What they say of Jupiter is that he thunders; and what man has to do is to sacrifice his choicest, though it were his son or his daughter, to the angry God. And what we call “revelation” marks this era or that, when the black veil of separation is drawn away, when God the Father is revealed as the Father to man,—the child,—when we are taught again and yet again and yet again what is the humanity of God and what is the divinity of man. Man is a partaker

of the divine nature; and, when he really wills and does, it is God working in him. This world is made for man to subdue, and man is made to subdue it to God. That is what we wisely call revelation.

The distinction of our fathers is that they understood all this, in a measure. Because they did, New England is New England, the United States is the United States; because they could come to God and he could come to them, and nobody could interfere.

“FREEDOM to worship God,”—that is what Mrs. Hemans calls it. This they sought, and this they found. They had been “harried out” from their own land by a fool whom they had for a king. They were but closely cabined in the refuge they found in Holland. But here was freedom first from king or from burgo-master, and also freedom to worship.

The open sky! The earth as God made it without chains! And the present God! The child with his Father! The Father with his child!

We do our best to restore all the fond memories of the first excursions, of the opening of the mayflower in the spring, of the welcome of the faithful Samoset. That every new walk should have its tale of a new discovery, that the shallop could never put out for a day but she came home with some new curiosity! We study this freshness of new life to men who had been weaving fustian and baize or stitching on jerkins in a Leyden workshop,—all this unites in our imagination. But this picture is not real unless we see in it that these were godly men, who did not think they were in a desert, but knew they were with *God*,—*God's* heaven above them! *God's* earth beneath them

God's ocean lapping at the beach! the world fitted for man, man fitted for the world, because it is *God's* world, and men are *God's* sons, and women are his daughters,—“Our Father” and “his children”! For daily human life their Bible began with the words, “The Lord God planted a garden in Eden.” They had looked for that garden in England, and his grace the archbishop was the gardener and locked the gate. He and his had forced them to Holland, and they looked for their garden there. But this new world—“this brave new world” which hath such wonders in it—was heard of even then, on the other side of the ocean, which seemed so much wider than it seems to us now. They knew they should not find a place of paradise. They did not expect to find apples or oranges or palm-trees, but they did expect to find God. And, as you and I know, those do find him who seek for him with all their hearts, and you and I know that the Father seeketh those that worship him.

FOR Thanksgiving Day, or any day of decent life, this is the first thought or memory of the morning: it is the last thought or memory as one goes to sleep,—God is with me, and I am with him. And for to-day you and I are to train ourselves or inspirit ourselves by tracing out this companionship wherever we are. And we are to play our part in the symphony, whatever that part is, and we are to open our lives more cordially to the others who are playing their part. We are to persuade the children to do so. Yes! with that resolute fellow who strikes on the kettledrum yonder, and with that delicate creature as well who plays the flute. Nearer to them and nearer to the great Master Com-

poser of the universe; and all along we are seeking him with all our hearts.

I do not say that they could not establish this intimacy in the Clock Steeg in Leyden. But I do say that because they were godly men and women they could establish it here in the wilderness, whether they broke the icicles in a brook at Plymouth or whether they cut down spruce-trees and rolled the logs for their fortress. I say they felt that they worked with God and that he worked with them, as they did not feel his presence in the fustian shop or at the loom. They found that the God of Eden was the God of their new-found Manomet, that the God of the palm-tree is the God of the pine and cedar and spruce; that he sends Moses as his messenger on one day and sends the Indian Samoset with his message to-morrow, and that to him to-day and to-morrow are the same. "Give us *this day* our daily bread" is the language of the Lord's Prayer as we read it in Matthew. "Give us *day by day* our daily bread" is the language in Luke; and the two are the same. The same God who has been feeding this race of his children from the time when the first man and woman "stepped forth resplendent" to this hour is the God to whom I owe this Swansdown flour which the mills in Minneapolis made for me from that first-grade wheat which my ploughman and reapers harvested for me in the great harvest field in Dakota. The knife with which I spread my butter on my bread is from the same steel which the Steel Trust forged from the iron which was melted from the block which some of their workmen stumbled over as he went down to his bath at Marquette. If the man had been named Nahum or Zerubbabel or Abednego, and had happened to serve

God in eight centuries before Christ, you read of his exploit in the Bible. He is named John Smith or John Herreshof or Patrick Hennessey, and you read his name in the newspaper, but all the same he is working in the providence of the same loving Father who sent him on this business when he wanted to give you and me our daily bread. And it is not fitting, it is not worth our while, that you and I should grind through the humdrum of daily life without remembering every hour, as Thanksgiving Day bids us remember, that we are at his High Court all the time. We are standing next the throne, and the King beckons me or he beckons you, to say: "Do you see those poor fellows who seem to be cold? Weave me some cloth for them. Do you see that ship which is going to sea half-equipped? Spin for me a cable for her. Do you see those nails which will break under the strain? Forge for me something which is better."

We owe it to Him, and we owe it to ourselves, that each day shall be divine; and for this we have to remember that the world is made for God's children, and that God's children are born so that they must subdue the world.

"The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

"And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you and with your seed after you."

You will spend half an hour to good advantage this afternoon if you will work out the changes in your own calling, the advances to a higher life which the last century has made; and, if you will trace them to their origin, inevitably you will find that that origin

is a religious origin. It is the triumph of spirit over matter; that is, it is man's closer walk with God. I do not except my own calling, the pulpit. A hundred years ago my own grandfather, as good a man and as unselfish as lived, would have said that his business was to persuade Aaron or Mary in his congregation to save their souls from hell. So it was! But after a hundred years he and men like him had so wrought in their work, better than they knew, that what the pulpit of to-day is telling you all is to save other people, to save all the people whom you have to do with, to uplift other lives, and to tread on all scorpions and serpents and all the powers of the enemy. Thus in the physical inventions. As I am forever saying, each man has a thousand times as much physical power at his command as his grandfather had one hundred years ago. George Stephenson, if he takes a train to-morrow to Albany in six hours, where it would have taken Adonijah Stephenson a fortnight to drive his span of horses a hundred years ago, not only takes a thousand times as much behind him as Adonijah's span would have taken, but he presents to everybody concerned thirteen fresh days which were wasted in that business.

For we cannot tell—no one can tell—what part the physical inventors have had in the coming of the kingdom, if they tried to bring it in, and what part the teachers and preachers and poets, the men who printed books and who read them, how much the Daniel Boone who cut down the forest and filled up the ravine, or the Lucy Boone and her children, the Brainerd and the Campbell who made in the wilderness a Christian home.

By the hand and with the endeavor, yes, say, of

a hundred million of his children, the good God gave to me the first crumb of bread which I ate this morning.

Physical blessings? Yes, the bit of bread. Mental ingenuity? Yes, the science of Priestley and Torricelli, the cleverness of Stephenson and Corliss. But as the lord of these, the soul of man, the child carrying out the will of God the Father, we are to thank *God* for these inventions and improvements. It is not our ancestors, the hyenas or the anthropoids, from whom we inherited the justice, the persistence, the rectitude, which bridge the rivers or rivet the boilers or smelt the iron. In this long, God-directed process there has been many a failure. Some lazy French boy drove a rotten bolt in Fulton's barge on the river Seine, and the little steamboat sank the day when she should have shown her best to the great Napoleon. The world was set back a year or two by that lazy boy. For every stroke of careless work, every lazy delay in delivery of a letter, every lie told to a voter, every corner in a wheat market, has set back the progress of man and the purpose of God. What has been done has been done by men and women who have tried to do their duty. The sailor swinging down from the ship in the Arctic to take his place in the boat which is to send back the oil which eases the travel of the locomotive has had the courage and loyalty to do his part. And, on the other hand, the shirk in the next berth, who has refused, who has sworn that he will not turn out with the others, he has set God's work back. The successes have been won by the brave men and true. The delays and failures have come from the lazy, the selfish, the liars, and the thieves. Even history condescends to own that it was not Nar-

ragansetts or Mohicans or Ojibways or Blackfeet, who brought to me my daily bread. But history prattles about the Caucasian race of the "Anglo-Saxon spirit" of adventure. Yet I do not observe that the Caucasian race has done much for the Caucasus. And I have never heard of an Anglo-Saxon who was worth his salt in the advance of mankind till the Anglo-Saxon adventurer fell in with a Christian apostle. And in this nation (to talk of what we see) I know, and we all know, that every step in the victories of this land has been hindered by the men who lived for themselves, by the liars and the thieves, the drunkards and the adulterers,—by those who lived for themselves and died for themselves. And we know that success has come, light in the place of darkness, truth in place of falsehood, where men lived to the glory of God, and chose to enjoy his enterprises forever.

In the future here is our hope, our effort, our prayer, that men may walk with God as they have never done. He will reveal himself to them as they have never seen him nor heard him. The humanity of God, the divinity of men, assert themselves.

And, lo! his kingdom comes, and earth becomes a part of heaven.

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APR 12 1917

THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE

BY

REV. PAUL REVERE FROTHINGHAM

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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There are two forms of membership in this Association provided for those who desire to cooperate in the spread of liberal religious thought and influence:

I. *Life Membership.* Any individual may, by the payment of \$50, become a *Life Member* of the American Unitarian Association. Such a person is entitled to vote at all business meetings, to receive the Year Book and Annual Report, and, by means of frequent communications, is kept in touch with the various enterprises promoted by the Association.

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Address communications and contributions to the

American Unitarian Association
25 BEACON STREET BOSTON, MASS.

THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE.

"The power of an endless life."—HEBREWS vii. 16.

THERE could be no better commentary on these words of the apostle than the wide-spread importance and general significance of Easter Sunday. When the sceptic and the unbeliever undertake to persuade us that the thought of immortality has lost its hold upon the human mind, we have but to call attention to the joy and hope and cheer which go to make the Easter Festival the most wonderful and glorious in all the year. What charm there is, what poetry, what suggestiveness, in the dim yet radiant mystery of the day! Then the churches of all faiths are crowded, and many a man, and woman, too, who has not sought the atmosphere of public worship in the twelve-month past, comes forth once more to share the promise of the Easter message.

And what is it that accounts for this,—for these crowded churches, these surging multitudes of people who soon with eager, happy faces will fill the city streets, and bring a new light into all our various homes? What is the meaning and the magic of it all?

The answer is a very simple one. It is "the power of an endless life." On Easter Day, as on no other in the course of all the circling year, we feel ourselves immortal. Life is now triumphant. Death is conquered. The grave is not the end of all. Angel influences fill the air. Descending from on high, they

roll away the stones of doubt and grief. They say to the saddened soul and darkened heart: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He or she whom you have loved and lost is not here, but is arisen, and is gone before you into new and higher life." That, of course, is the triumph-note and the glorious burden in the song that once again is taken up and made to echo everywhere. For the world itself keeps Easter Day, and in bursting seed and opening leaf and refulgent flower we find a world-wide prophecy of life to come.

The Power of an Endless Life! I want you to consider with me exactly what the nature of that power is. Let us take some earnest thought together of what the value is of believing in a life to come when this life here is past,—the value, I mean, to human beings in general, to the race as a whole, and to each of us as individuals who have duties to discharge, and burdens to bear, and losses to meet, and failures and sorrows to encounter. We will not seek in this connection to justify the faith, nor yet to prove the solid nature of the ground on which it rests. We will not consider even the probabilities of its being true. It will be enough to estimate its value and the practical worth it has for living, thinking, toiling, hoping human beings whose eyes behold the heights which their feet are ever restless to attain.

In the first place, let me say—though I wish to dwell upon the point for a moment only—that I cannot in the least agree with those who claim that if death ends all, then duty loses its entire force, and love is a mistake, and the whole world robbed of higher meaning and divine intention. As well might you say, I cannot and will not enjoy these flowers which

to-day are blooming in so fair a beauty, because in a few brief days they will fade and wither and be thrown away. The flowers are beautiful, a marvel of delicate design and wonderful construction, no matter how long they last or what becomes of them when their glory has entirely departed. They give expression to God's life in Beauty, irrespective wholly of their power to endure.

Or, again, to argue as so many people seem inclined, were as though a man should say, I cannot enter into all the joy and privilege of this spot where I am stopping, because in a few short days I must leave the glory of the mountains and the wonder of the sea, and go back to all the dismal darkness and the dreary turmoil of the city street which forms my home. The wiser and the better, as the actual way in life, is to enjoy the glories and the privileges while we may, being thankful for the little of them that is given us.

And so it is with life itself. If God in his wisdom has nothing more for me out there beyond the silent limits of the grave, if there is no more consciousness and no more joy and love and opportunity to struggle and aspire, I still will thank him for the fair earth that I here have seen, for the wonder of childhood and the mystery of manhood and the power and capacity to know and trust and hope. For these in themselves are good and glorious, no matter what has gone before or what may ultimately follow after. If they are not all that we have wished and dreamed of, at least they are vastly more than most of us deserve, or have given evidence of knowing rightly how to use.

And this, if true of life itself, is likewise true of Duty, which lends to life its greatest dignity and power.

There have been many wise and very earnest men who have said with the apostle Paul: "What doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Luther said this, claiming even that belief in God himself was impotent except when coupled with the confidence in life to come. Doubtless there are many, too, who argue in the churches thus to-day. But, to my mind, no mistake could be much more profound. "Though there were no heaven, and no God to rule the world," I feel like saying with the ancient Hindu teacher, "virtue would be none the less the binding law of life, for it is man's great privilege to know and serve the right." And so I feel like crying with the modern prophet: "Hath man no second life? Pitch this one high." For we do our duty, or we try to do it, we help the helpless, serve the wretched, and hold to justice, honor, and the truth, not because another life is waiting for us, and surely not because we look for some reward; but because there is something telling us we *ought* to do so. It is Life to act in ways like these,—life, I mean, at its highest, best, and most complete estate.

But let us turn from thoughts like these, in which there is little inspiration or real profit; that we may find the need and feel the value of the mighty message which this glorious day would bring us each.

The Power of an Endless Life!

First of all, it is a power of this belief that it reminds us of the largeness of the world, of the immensity of the scene of things in the midst of which we live and move and have our being. It suggests in a forceful, beautiful and helpful way the fact that in the "Father's house are many mansions,"—not rooms merely, chambers to sleep in, spaces for rest and peace and

enjoyment, but "mansions," dwelling-places for the spirit, where love shall claim its own again, and growth continue, and truth be sought and found, and the failure and the suffering here become forgotten and redeemed in new attainment, deeper joy, and endless satisfaction.

In every other respect the world is large enough. It has sufficient resources to meet the needs of human beings and to answer them as they arise. Man has no hunger and no thirst, no desire of the senses, and no craving of an outward kind which the world is not equipped to satisfy. There is food provided for the body, there are objects of affection for the heart, and mysteries for the mind to search out and explore. Our eyes love beauty, and God has clothed the lily of the field in glory far surpassing Solomon's. He has draped the very sky with splendors both by night and day, and He flings a new and wondrous carpet down each spring across the wide floor of the cold and silent earth.

And so we feel it will be as regards this deepest craving of man's soul for life. Its very presence with us seems a promise of fulfilment. As we ponder on the dream and weigh the hope, we feel its silent power. The world itself around us seems to expand. We are reminded of how much there is that we cannot know, —such depths of mystery, such wealth of unused power, such spaces for the spirit to explore. Yes! it is a power of the endless life that it fills us with a keener consciousness of the greatness of God's world in which we live.

More distinctly still, however, it does this same thing for ourselves. It exalts, that is to say, it glorifies, it increases our respect for, human nature.

Great hopes are for great souls, as Dr. Martineau well said; and the very fact that men and women since the earliest times have dared to think themselves deserving of another life serves to strengthen the belief in human dignity and worth. The spiritual vision implies a spiritual being. And, in a world where so many things conspire to remind us of our littleness and weakness, this must surely be accounted a mighty function for any faith or expectation to perform. Day by day we cannot get away from the many infirmities to which the flesh is heir. We feel our limitations: we are made to suffer on account of ignorance and blindness. In the face of, Nature's mighty forces, and confronted by the endless reaches and immensities of Time and Space, we cry out in the silence of our separate souls: "What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of Man that thou shouldest visit him? Behold thou hast made his days as it were a span long, and his age is even as nothing in respect of thee."

Into the midst of all this disenchantment and self-depreciation comes the thought, however, of the immortal life,—of something in us all that death cannot destroy nor the grave hold captive, nor time look down upon in mockery. And, lo! the balance is restored, and life takes on new meaning and responsibilities. Though the world and life are not deprived of dignity and meaning when left without this thought, they assume new value and impressiveness when it is present with us.

But the power of an endless life has further reaches still in this direction. Not only does it add to the meaning and the dignity of life: it is needed and effective, too, in lending life an aspect of *completeness*

and *maturity*. Without it there is often no fulfilment, no sense of destiny attained, of powers utilized, of capacities employed and promises redeemed, of justice done and purposes accomplished. Some of you, no doubt, have visited the famous town of Avignon in the southern part of France. It is built beside the river Rhone, whose turbid waters hurry past which had their distant birth far up among the Alpine snows. In that little city certain of the mediæval popes were forced to live when their power for a time had waned in Rome. They built a mighty palace there, and laid broad gardens out upon the hill, which bear a close resemblance to the solemn Vatican at Rome. But the historic interest of the place is not centred solely in the palace or the gardens. As the tourist looks down on the waters of the winding river, his gaze is fastened on the famous "pont coupé," as it is called,—the broken or the interrupted bridge. Far out it runs, with graceful arch and solid masonry, until it reaches the very middle of the stream. But there it stops, and there it stands, where it has stood for centuries,—an incomplete and interrupted piece of work. But all its lines and every feature tell the story. *It was meant to reach the other shore.*

And is not that an accurate and faithful picture of this thing we know as life? Human life would often seem an incomplete and undeveloped thing unless it has the power to reach across the deep, dark stream of death.

In saying this, I do not simply have in mind what we are called upon to see so often; namely, the career that is cut off in its very prime, the work that is brought to an earthly close before it is hardly well begun. This, indeed, calls out for another shore to

be attained where opportunity shall be renewed and activity continued and noble powers put to noble uses. The short life here, the interrupted course, the defeated promise, make us feel the absolute necessity for something in the realm beyond death's river, where youth shall reach on to maturity, and power, talent, genius, find the room they need to be developed and perfected.

Much more than this is true, however. For, in the deepest sense, *all* life, or nearly all, is incomplete, and seems to predicate another world. Human nature bears the evidence of having been designed to find fulfilment elsewhere. Those who reach the highest often ask for such fulfilment, and those who struggle vainly clearly need it. When Michel Angelo died, he left behind him in his studio *unfinished* works of art which far outnumbered those which he had found the time and strength to finish. Goethe, with all his wealth of extraordinary learning, breathed a final prayer, with feeble breath, for greater light to come; and a French philosopher the other day, on finding that the end was near, was heard to sigh that he had work planned out for at least two hundred years.

Then, too, we cannot well be negligent of this, that the very lines and structures of our natures—the arches of our hopes, the whole direction of our aims and progress,—seem, as with the famous bridge, to indicate completion elsewhere. As men and women, we have longings and desires that nothing finite wholly can content. We have spiritual natures, and we live in a material world. We dream of eternity, and must take incessant note of time. We crave far higher than we reach, and gaze beyond the utmost limit of our powers to attain.

When you see laborers digging deep and laying wide and firm foundations, you know that the building which has been designed to rest upon them will be proportionately large. If you go down on the busy shore which slopes away to the quiet river, and measure with your eye the mighty keel which workmen carefully have laid, and look up at the giant ribs which heavy planks are closing in, you may not know precisely what the nature of the vessel is which is being built. You cannot tell, perhaps, what her rig will be, nor the kind of cargo she is meant to carry. But you do know this: that she is not being built for inland traffic nor mere harbor use, but to meet the ocean's waves and storms and to reach some distant port in safety. Thus, too, it is with life as it stands related to the world around us. Something beyond is clearly hinted at, and something generous and large. We cannot measure it nor understand precisely what it is; but it makes life seem a nobler and completer whole, and in the contemplation of it there is satisfaction.

The Power of an Endless life! What shall we say, in closing now, of its power to console and cheer and bless and strengthen? Ah! what need be said, except to point you, as I did at the beginning, to the joy and hope and radiant power of Easter Day itself. How it acts to hearten and inspire all! The youngest feel it, and the oldest know the welcome sunshine that it pours among the lengthening shadows which the years have brought. Exactly what our life would be *without* this power none of us can say; but what we find it when the faith is vital, and the trust assured and firm, we *all* have often seen. It lulls to rest the sobbing child of warm affection, tossing on the pillow of despair. It soothes the vain and angry thoughts that

rise in hot rebellion at the losses and the partings of the world.

Do you remember what the explanation was that the ancients gave of the bright phenomenon of nature which appears upon the very clouds of heaven when the storm has passed? It was called God's bow of promise,—the token of his covenant with man. It was said God placed it there when men had just passed through a bitter and a hard experience of loss and pain, to give assurance that they nevermore would be forgotten, but might look above for help. "And it shall come to pass," said God, "when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen upon the cloud."

O blessed thought and happy harbinger of good to come! Thus everywhere God's bow of promise shines. It arches with the glory of the spring above the dark, cold grave of winter. It tells of new life springing out of old, of truth that ever triumphs over error, of goodness rising out of evil, of Immortality when Death is past.

That is the Power of an Endless Life, and that the message of each Easter Sunday! Alas for him who does not feel it:—

"Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress-trees!
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!
Who hath not learned in hours of faith
The truth, to flesh and sense unknown,
That Life is ever lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own!"

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'BRADY'

APR 12 1917

IS THERE A RIGHTEOUS GOD?

BY REV. THOMAS VAN NESS

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET

AN ANSWER TO A LETTER.

The subject to which I call your attention this morning came to my mind after receiving from one of my parishioners the following letter in reference to last Sunday's sermon:—

BOSTON, MASS.

MY DEAR MR. VAN NESS:

That sermon of yours was all very fine and beautiful, but I find it mighty hard to believe. Why, if God is what you say he is, then how do you reconcile to any such theory of a God of love and justice the terrible wars that still go on in the world? How do you account for the terrible crimes and murders about which we read in the newspapers? It does not seem to me as if there is any law or order in this world which you can call divine. No, I can't understand it. Why, just look at it. Do you mean to tell me that the so-called "best people" all got their money through honesty? Not a bit of it. Rascality and trickery triumph most of the time. Oh, you needn't say that these sleek rascals suffer the anguish of conscience. They don't. No, not a bit of it. Look at their satisfied faces, look at their oily smiles. No, they eat and sleep with a good conscience or no conscience at all, I don't know which. I tell you the preacher's theory is all good enough, but we people who sit in the pews think there's a lot of mere luck and chance in this world and the good are mighty lonely.

Yours very truly,

APR 12 1917

IS THERE A RIGHTEOUS GOD?

"In thee, Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be confounded."—*Te Deum*.

"Show thy marvellous loving-kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand those that put their trust in thee."—PSALM xvii. 7.

IF there is a righteous God, who is all-powerful, should there not be in this world something like a righteous society? If there is a God who hates evil and loves purity, should there not be some recognized punishment dealt out to those who commit wrong, and are licentious and wicked? If there is a God of justice, then should there not be some adequate compensation for those who toil and sweat and agonize? Questions like these and numerous others of a kindred character soon come to the man or woman of a religious nature who in childhood has received a Christian education. On the one hand is the ideal of a pure, loving, and righteous Deity, on the other hand the facts of life, which seem to point conclusively to disorder and sin and, in many instances, to the triumph of the dishonest and cruel. What shall we say? Shall we deny the existence of disease and pain and misery? Shall we shut our eyes to all horrible crimes? Shall we affirm that the outer world is illusion, but a passing dream, and agree with the poet that all discord is harmony not understood, all partial evil universal good? More, shall we go to the extreme of logic, and assert that in spite of the evidence of our senses, in spite of all the experiences of human beings, nevertheless the real fact is, that whatever is is right?

I do not know how it is with you. You may find consolation in ignoring the facts, in asserting that all is good and that there is no evil, but I for one am not willing so to do. I recognize very clearly that there is pain in the world, that injustice and cruelty are sometimes triumphant and that innocence and goodness are often no match in the every-day struggle with wickedness and dishonesty.

It gives me no help to be told that the mystery of human life is unsolvable. If there are no answers to these perplexing questions, why do they obtrude themselves? If there is no reason manifested in the government of the world, then why am I endowed with the sense of reason and justice? I wish, therefore, to examine a few of the difficulties which beset my friend's faith, in the hope that such examination may shed some light on a supposed dark pathway.

First, then, as to this outer world,—this world of atom and molecule of force and form and changing phenomena,—what of it?

It stands to reason that in such a world particles of force cannot be allowed to move by mere chance or whim without definite rule of action.

We recognize that a railway crowded with traffic must be managed by the strictest discipline. Each train must move on a certain specified moment, and not at the caprice of the engineer; each signal switch must answer to definite electrical impulses; each telegraph operator must forward instructions without delay or abbreviation. In short, there must be one controlling will throughout the whole system,—the will of the train-despatcher. That will must control brakemen, conductors, station masters, and engineers, and at the same time control the movements of all inani-

mate objects, such as freight cars, passenger trains, locomotives, signals, and the like. Otherwise there is sure to be wreck and disaster.

Surely, in so grand a combination of forces as compose this world, in so stupendous an arrangement as is this universe, there must be equal order and exactitude. No particle, no atom, must be allowed to slip or wander from its place. If each does not move according to some specified law, there will come, sooner or later, an overwhelming catastrophe. This being so, we find each substance, each element, obeying a rule which it did not make, but which holds it to unswerving obedience. The magnetic needle turns to the north. Solids immersed in liquids are buoyed up by a force equal to the weight of the liquid displaced. Water boils at 212° , freezes at 32° , and so through the long list of definite and known ways of natural action. Knowing these modes of action, we can count upon them with perfect assurance. A man trusting to the law of gravity is safe in building his house in a certain part of the city. He does not expect to awake in the morning and find his home a hundred feet up in the air or removed to the side of a mountain. Trusting to the working of the electrical current, he is confident that he may generate power and light if the right conditions have been complied with in every particular.

Now if God is one and not divided, then moral law, unswerving, absolute, prevails in the spiritual universe, even as natural law does in the physical universe. Does it? Here is the point where our faith staggers, here is where we are not quite sure; for, in spite of our desire to believe, we see so much unrighteousness and disorder that we cannot but doubt.

This unrighteousness and disorder is not confined to our own limited sphere. If it were, we might reconcile ourselves to it by imagining that in other and more favored parts of the world purity and justice are more influential; but the newspaper and the magazine tell a different story. They tell us that the wicked everywhere apparently escape the penalties of wrong-doing. They show how evil and vulgarity seem to succeed in spite of all the forces of righteousness, until at length we turn from the forbidding picture almost in despair. "How," we say, "can such injustice and confusion, such inequality in society, be reconciled to the idea of a God who is a God of order and justice?" That is the question. It is a question that cannot be intelligently answered until we clearly realize that in the spiritual realm men must not be coerced and compelled as are physical atoms, but be granted a very large share of personal freedom, to think, to choose, and to do practically as they wish.

I repeat, human beings need to be given a large share of personal freedom, if ever they are to develop into moral beings.

What is meant by a moral man or woman? Why, one who, if he or she had so desired, could have been immoral, but instead chose to be true and virtuous. In other words, if character is to be developed in you or in me, then we must have the liberty to decide ourselves what we will do. Consequently, if we are granted freedom to do right, it follows, does it not, that such freedom involves the possibility of doing wrong?

God Almighty cannot make you righteous against your will. Why? Because virtue consists in the free choice of righteousness. Therefore, if this is a world

not made up of slaves, not composed of mere automations, then you and I direct our affairs according to our own best desires or according to our own wicked and passionate impulses.

If we do largely direct affairs, if we can think and act uncoerced by the Almighty Power, it stands to reason that every act of ours or every act of our neighbor is not a good act. No, far from it. Injustice and cruelty can hold the stage, and often do hold the very centre of the stage, against all the powers of righteousness.

The violence, the cruelty, shown by a Duke of Alva in Holland, the burning at the stake of numerous men and women by Spanish Inquisition, was not the victory of the good. Far from it,—very far from it. It was the victory of the base and brutish. Think, too, of the many hundreds of nameless martyrs who suffered in the Roman arena, of the many hundreds who in Russia have been driven into exile, whipped, chained, imprisoned in deadly prisons or equally deadly mines. Even in our own land the passionate howlings and disorderly acts of the pro-slavery mobs in New England, the breaking up of abolition meetings, and the unjust treatment accorded to Wendell Phillips and Garrison were certainly anything but victories for the right and the true. Does all this mean that God is mocked, that he cannot carry out his divine purposes? Does it mean that, while there is order and precision in the physical world, there is none, and never can be, in the realm of human beings? On the face of things it may look that way, a superficial glance might give one that impression; but more careful observation, closer study, will show the error in such a mode of thinking.

Law and freedom are not irreconcilable terms. I know a place where men do not smoke nor drink, where they are industrious and orderly, where they rise on time and go to bed on time, where there are no differences of rank nor station, and where the table of the one is as well served as the table of the other, where on Sundays in the most prompt and decorous manner they one and all go to religious service and maintain correct behavior, taking part in unison when hymn or liturgy is announced. That place is the Colorado Penitentiary at Cañon City. Law reigns there. It is the law of compulsion, of the shot-gun. No personal liberty is allowed.

I know of another place where there is equal law. Nevertheless, men smoke and drink, many of them to excess, some are quarrelsome and disorderly, others lazy and dishonest. The greatest differences of rank and station exist, and on Sunday, in place of attending church, a large number go to bicycle races, picnics, baseball games, or indulge in lively and vulgar frolics.

In this second place there is freedom with law.

That second place is Boston. What shall we say? Which is the better method?

Is God's method like that of the penitentiary where we must be good and obey, whether we will or not? No. Is God's method like that of a modern American city where, although there is law against crime and disorder, nevertheless the law-breakers are many and punishment is neither swift nor sure? No. God's method is not the method of compulsion, neither is it the method of lawlessness and license.

Every infraction of the moral law is certain, sooner or later, to meet with its punishment.

The breaking of the moral law does not prove that

there is no all-embracing rule of righteousness. What, however, is inconsistent, if it be allowed, is the escape from consequences. Is there such escape? It appears as though all around us were persons who have sinned and who have eluded the consequences of wrong-doing. They seem to be enjoying all the fruits of prosperity and respectability. What of them?

Do they ever suffer the penalty?

Yes; for no sin really goes unrebuked, and no sinner ever escapes the consequences of his own wrong-doing. He cannot. Why can he not? Because he is punished, not for his sins, but by them. The reason why we fail to appreciate this fact is because we are always looking to see the sin punished in some outward and temporary way. Far more terrible than that, the sin is always punished in some inward and permanent way. What do I mean? I mean that we always expect to see punishment come to a man,—in reality, it comes *in* a man. We expect to see him lose his houses and his lands and his civic honors. He may or he may not; but one thing is sure,—each day that he engages in sin he loses something of his spirituality, something of his fine perception, of his sensitive conscience, of his ability to enjoy the true and the good. He descends the plane of spiritual existence, approaches once again nearer and nearer the plane of the brute, approaches nearer and nearer to the automatic state where instinct and passion and gross habit rule him, becomes inwardly a Mr. Hyde, though outwardly he has the fair front of a Dr. Jekyll. In short, the condemnation pronounced against him is that he shall lose soul in exact proportion to his sin. . . . If he persists in unrighteousness and unholy ways, then a terrible night is sure to come when the decree shall go

forth, "This night shall thy soul be required of thee." After that what is there left?

We said that the riotings of roughs during the days of the abolition excitement, and the attempt to break up anti-slavery meetings in Northern cities, were the triumph of wrong. Yes, but only the temporary triumph. In the end, even through them and largely because of them, came free discussion,—the sacred right of free speech. We spoke of the cruelty of the Spanish rule in Holland, but that cruelty aroused the blood of Protestantism, drew the reformers together in a strong confederation, and eventually led to the freedom of the land and the establishment of the Dutch Republic, which for so many years was the European bulwark of religious and civil liberty.

And he who does right, shall not he himself be rewarded?

He is rewarded, perhaps not in the way we expect,—that is, in outer ways,—but in inner ways.

Emerson has said, "For everything you have missed you have gained something else."

If this be true, then certainly a cramped, hindered life may well be worth the living.

If I could show you this morning that invalids, slaves, prisoners of poverty, exiles, men and women chained and limited by adverse circumstances, have obtained their reward,—by being able to do the best work of the world,—possibly it would strengthen your faith in a moral order, and a compensation to those who seem deprived of blessings. I think such a thesis not impossible to prove, for at once such names occur to me as the slave Epictetus, as the exile Dante, as the blind man Milton, as the prisoner Bunyan, as the invalid Stevenson, who wrote in his diary, "I have

not had a day of real freedom from pain for fourteen years."

A man or woman undertakes to do his or her best in life, to stand for the truth, to be honest, kind, industrious, and painstaking. Such a person in a world of moral order ought to have his or her reward. What we often see is such a person experiencing discomfort, poverty, neglect, and years of hard work. Very well, as I said before, if such is the fact, let us not ignore it. What do we expect? Do we expect to see such a person rewarded with gold chains and easy-riding carriages? Do we expect that after a certain number of years such a person ought to be exempt from work and be given a large roll of one-hundred-dollar bills? My friends, there is but one legitimate reward of life, and that is increase of life.

What is the reward of learning one's lessons? As has been truly said, the reward is "not marks or praise or a college degree, though these may result: the true reward of learning one's lessons is the added power to learn other lessons. The use of capacity develops capacity." What is the reward of taking physical exercise? It is not in being given a professor's chair, not in being hailed as a great musician. No. "The athlete who seeks physical strength gains physical strength," not æsthetic insight, not something else.

What is the reward in keeping your temper? Does the reward come in being elected president of a college? No. Or governor of a State? No. The reward of keeping your temper is in the increased power of self-control. What is the reward of doing your duty as well as you can? It is the increased ability to do your duty.

What is the reward of telling the truth? Not houses and lands, but keener vision to see and know what is

the truth, and greater readiness to tell the truth on other occasions. In short, the reward for right living is greater ability to think right, choose right, do right. The crown that is promised to one who lives right is not a crown of diamonds and gold: it is a crown of life. Just as punishment for evil-doing means a narrower and narrower horizon, a less and less ability spiritually, a greater and greater loss of freedom, and eventually a slave's subjection to passion and habit, so the reward for right-doing means an ever-expanding horizon, a greater and greater growth in ability and power, and the breaking of the bonds which hold one to passion and habit, a coming forth into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

. . . Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane did not deny the facts of life. He did not commune with himself and repeat over and over again some formula, which might act like a soporific upon his brain and make him believe that Pilate was good, and the high priest good, and the Sanhedrim good, and Judas good, and everybody good, and in reality there was no evil, and consequently no pain and no shame and no agony. No, not at all. He did not try to get rid of the facts by ignoring them, but by overcoming them.

"Father, if it be possible, oh, if it be possible, let this fearful cup pass from me." That is the soul's cry. It is the cry of the mother when the child's life seems ebbing away; it is the business man's cry when his honesty leads him apparently to bankruptcy; it is the woman's cry when her conduct is going to be misunderstood, and she fears averted looks and the loss of friends and the scandalous head-lines in the newspapers.

In spite of this agonizing cry the evil is not taken

away, the cross looms up dark and sombre in the distance, and between is that awful *via dolorosa* to be trodden, minute by minute and hour by hour.

While the sin and the evil and the wickedness are all there and must be met, yet strength to meet them is given. "When I am weak, then am I strong"; when I rely no more on self, but on the Divine Power, then am I able to resist; when I can say, "Not my will, but thine be done," then in that moment am I conqueror.

Yes, the problems of life are tragic. It is cowardly to lessen their blackness, unsympathetic to deny them when a friend is perplexed by them, idle and foolish to evade them. They must, however, be studied, not alone, but as a part of a vast, grand, comprehensive movement looking to the making of divine sons and daughters out of human, passionate, self-willed men and women of earth.

One morning at Rugby a boy came to Dr. Arnold. In his face was dissatisfaction and distress, as he poured out to the sympathetic head-master his feelings in regard to the difficulties of his lessons and his inability to understand them. The doctor did not argue, he did not try to explain: he simply put his arm around the student, drew him up closely, and then, looking down into the boy's eyes, he said with that peculiar tenderness which was all his own, "My dear boy, I cannot make you understand now of what use these things will be to you, but you know that I am your friend."

In like manner Jesus of Nazareth speaks to us to-day.

I cannot make you fully understand misery and sorrow and wrong doing and death as I now understand them, but I can show you what the heart of God is

toward you, blazing, burning, revealed even in the darkest moments in all the white intensity of Almighty wisdom and love. If you can see that, can you not trust and wait?

As we look back nineteen hundred years and watch that figure walking through the streets of Palestinean towns, walking through the lily-grown fields, we remember that he seemed to have no chance, no home. He was a friend to the blind, the dumb, the sinner, the outcast, the smitten. Nevertheless, he had to stand in the blackness of darkness, reviled, persecuted, deserted, whipped, punished, nailed to a cross, and at length in the hot blaze of the Syrian sun dying like a common thief and malefactor.

In spite of it all he could say of his enemies, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do," and again, "Into thy hands, O God, I commit my spirit."

Is it not enough? Can we not wait? Can we not say, "Lead thou me on"? "In thee, O God, do I trust."

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The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ,
we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

American Unitarian Association

THE OBJECT OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO
“DIFFUSE THE KNOWLEDGE AND PROMOTE
THE INTERESTS OF PURE CHRISTIANITY.”

IN PROMOTING THIS PURPOSE THE ASSOCIATION ENGAGES IN MANY DIFFERENT FORMS OF PUBLIC SPIRITED ENDEAVOR.

IT MAINTAINS (1) executive offices in Boston, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, with a staff engaged in the direction and extension of the work of our fellowship of churches; (2) a Publicity Bureau for diffusing Unitarian principles through the medium of the public press; (3) a Social Service Bureau for quickening and guiding the philanthropic endeavors of the churches; (4) a Library of religious books, histories, and memorabilia.

IT PUBLISHES (1) the Hymn, Tune and Service Books and devotional literature for the use of liberal churches; (2) a considerable number of standard books illustrative of Unitarian history and teaching; (3) the Works of William Ellery Channing, and many sermons, tracts, and pamphlets for free distribution; (4) the Annual Year Book of the Unitarian Fellowship, and many Special Reports and Bulletins upon different phases of the work.

IT AIDS (1) more than a hundred churches and missions in the conduct of their regular work, in building churches and parsonages, and in supporting ministers; (2) students in preparing for the ministry; (3) fellow-citizens of foreign birth and speech in preparation for the duties and privileges of American life.

IT CO-OPERATES with the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, which gathers together the adherents of liberal religion from all parts of the world; with the Japan Unitarian Association, the Consistory of Unitarian Churches in Hungary, the Brahmo-Somaj of India, and many other similar agencies and organizations.

IT ADMINISTERS endowments (1) for the benefit of schools and churches of the Unitarian order; (2) for the relief of poor and worthy ministers and the widows of ministers; (3) for educating young men for ministerial service; (4) for providing public lectures in centers of population; (5) for the benefit of schools for colored people in the South; and (6) for many other beneficent purposes.

IT UNITES the leaders and workers of religious, educational and social organizations who desire fellowship, mutual exchange of thought, information and experience, and co-operation in work.

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REV. HOWARD N. BROWN

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

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JAN 12 1917

THE UNITARIAN PURPOSE.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."—MATT. vi. 33.

It may be profitable to go back for a moment to the beginning of the movement in Christian history which bears the Unitarian name, in order to see what we can find that appears to be most central and vital to its existence. For both the friends and the critics of this small body of ours have often seemed some distance astray in their endeavors to give a reasonable account of its traditional purpose and intent; and names in this world seldom provide any real clew to the character of the person or thing to which they are applied.

The name in this case might imply that our church existed chiefly for a dogmatic end; but the name was not chosen by those who now bear it, and to many of the greatest members of our household of faith, like Dr. Martineau, it has seemed unfortunate. Because the real genius of Unitarianism, if we go back to its beginnings, is essentially undogmatic; and never for a moment, in those days, did it wish to establish itself upon the basis of any dogma whatever. It is ridiculous to think of the early preachers of this faith of ours as having a new set of speculative opinions which they undertook to plant in place of other beliefs that they aimed to destroy. Their preaching was rather characterized by

a most eloquent silence on all such controverted questions. They conceived that they had something to say vastly better worth talking about. Their whole purpose was very little theoretical and most eminently practical. They really had no warfare to wage on anybody's belief, save as points of doctrine became involved in this practical end.

It is worth while to notice what the world said of them, because the world, in its way, is a very shrewd observer. On matters of weight and moment it is apt to have a feeling of what is the real heart of the question not very much at fault; and its comments often strike very close to the key of the situation. Now the thing most frequently said of Unitarians when their new enterprise first challenged the world's attention was that they were most excellent, moral people, but that they lacked religion; and this judgment, according to the general meaning of the words employed, was entirely just and true. They were good people, morally,—as good as the world has ever seen,—and of what was then popularly supposed to be religion they made a distinct point of possessing rather a scant supply.

They had become aware of a certain unprofitable and even dangerous extreme into which religion, by reason of the very strength and sublimity of the sentiments it creates in the heart, always tends to run. They saw that Christianity all about them had gone too far in certain directions, and they meant to correct this extravagance, in themselves at least, by increase of emphasis upon the moral life.

The tendency that carries so much of the world's faith to what is in many respects a false position if we will take the trouble to think of it a little,

is easily understood. Religion, if it means anything, means trust in God, dependence upon his will, and reliance upon his almighty power. Now the instincts of the human heart which incline it to seek this spiritual aid, and dispose it to rest upon this divine guidance and support when they become an active force in the life of men, are among the strongest impulses of our nature. And therein lies the danger, when they are given entire and unquestioned sway; for they sometimes overshadow the moral life as a vigorous tree casts into the shade and robs of vital sunlight the fruitful bush planted by its side. It is good that we should trust God,—so good, so satisfying, so full of deep peace and content, that for the truly devout mind there is always risk of carrying its trust too far.

Conceive how it might be with the relations between parent and child in any of our households. Here, let us say, is a son who deeply loves and honors his father. He is profoundly grateful for all that his father's affection has bestowed upon him. All his study is to do exactly what his father wishes, and he will take no step whatever without seeking to know his father's mind. Now is it not plain that in this dependence upon the superior will, however beautiful and praiseworthy it may be, there is some peril to the younger mind? Can we not imagine a wise father who finds his son thus clinging fondly, even in mature life, to the hand that guided his infancy, deliberately refusing to act any longer as mentor and oracle, in order that the son may be forced to decide some questions for himself? It is not good for any human being to be forever in leading-strings that relieve him of all responsibility, and leave no room for his own initiative, though the

wisdom which thus supports him be the very highest and the best. In the education of our children we are careful to provide a training which teaches them, more and more, to exercise and rely upon their own judgment; for it can be nothing better than perpetual infancy when people merely obey the rule that is set for them to observe.

We mortals are often given to complaining because we are here left so much to ourselves; because so frequently, when we most long for it, we do not hear any voice bidding us turn to the right hand or the left, and must decide, by such scrutiny of the track as we can make, which is the path for us to take. But shall we think of the heavenly love as less thoughtful for our welfare than a wise parent for his child? And can there be any doubt that, if Heaven would answer all our questions, we should never in any respect whatever assume the guidance of our own steps?

They who devote themselves to works of charity soon learn how easy and how mischievous it is, by injudicious giving, to weaken the mind's powers of self-help. There is a spiritual mendicancy which perhaps lies at the root of all pauperism; and religion, though influenced by the best of motives, has been very guilty of increasing that defect. For, though we may be sure that God does not permit such aid to be given from heavenly sources as would leave his earthly children no adequate training in the exercise of their own conscience and reason and will, yet men are forever prone to imagine that they have found that degree of divine help, and this imagination is only less bad for them than the actual reality would be.

There have been people who thought themselves in constant communication with the spirits of their de-

parted friends, and who have undertaken to manage their business affairs not in accordance with the dictates of any prudence or sagacity of their own, but as these spirit friends should direct. I never heard of an instance of this kind that did not result disastrously. Almost as a matter of course, the pilot which God has placed at the helm of each life-bark closes his eyes and goes to sleep, being taught that the ship over which he is set to watch is to be thenceforth miraculously steered; and, alas! in many instances at least, the rudder is thus left to swing to and fro at the mere mercy of wind and tide.

There are people to-day who fully believe that it is God's good pleasure to keep their bodies perfectly strong and well, if only they are trustful enough, and never doubt his power. Is it not certain that the effect of this belief, wherever it spreads, will be to discourage those studies of the conditions of our physical well-being which have begun to yield great results, and to render the mind somewhat less watchful and careful in its observance of the laws of health?

Man, of necessity, puts his trust in God. He cannot live without some kind of belief in the friendliness and helpfulness of powers above himself. If we consider our weakness and ignorance, and the immensities that surround us on every side, it is no wonder that the world so grasps at any and every promise of divine assistance, or that, when it thinks it has found such help, it should be evermore prone to renounce all thought of self-deliverance. This, indeed, is what religion means to millions of human beings,—simply letting God carry the burden and direct the task. For what purpose was Christ sent, they will ask, if not to bring down to earth the grace which is our

help in time of need? Of what possible use is the church, save to help us get hold of the hand of God, that he may carry us whither we desire to go?

But there was something besides this in the mission of Christ. He came, it is true, to lead men to God; but it was with no intent that, when they had found the Father, they should wait supinely upon his mercy. He came to found a new kingdom, and to call men to a new life; not merely to rescue a race that was spiritually perishing from the dangers by which it was beset, but to put it to work with earnest and tireless heart for the moral and spiritual improvement of all earthly conditions. He taught his followers that kind of faith which looks to God as the faithful rewarder of honest toil. Take it for granted, he said, that things are so ordered as to bring an answer to all your needs, and then make it the first business of your lives to seek God's kingdom, to find and do his righteousness.

Now when the Unitarian movement arose, a century ago, it grew out of the feeling and perception that this part of the purpose of Christ had become obscured in the thought of the church, and was half forgotten. It was not so much an affair of false doctrine as of false attitude and emphasis. The church was doing very little to make this a better world, its one aim being to get souls successfully through the change of death into a better world hereafter. Its summons to mankind to rouse up and work to bring the life of God into the life of men, here and now, had grown feeble and faint. The common mind heard little from its pulpits of what man could accomplish, using divine agencies as Christ had given him both example and precept to do, but heard mostly of what God would perform for the soul which came to him

asking to be made rich with heavenly treasure. Practically, it had come about that the religious mind went to God, not so much seeking spiritual employment, that it might earn its livelihood, as seeking bread, that without labor on its part it might be fed; and that was the situation which early Unitarians meant to reform and amend.

The world made upon them incessant requirement for some account of their doctrines. What is your understanding of the scheme of salvation? it asked again and again. And they could only reply that they were not very much interested in such questions. We demand in turn, they said to the Christian world, that you partly leave off these discussions about the divine plan, and devote yourselves in more zealous fashion to doing some of the things that Christ said. They themselves, with an enthusiasm which had not been seen on earth for many generations, devoted their lives to works of practical philanthropy and reform; and in the course of a few years they founded all those great branches of charitable endeavor which the world has since taken up and which now promise so much good for future time.

They did all this, moreover, in large sympathy for the very people who accused them of much evil. No one ever complied more fully with the apostolic injunction to "speak the truth in love." They understood perfectly the depth and genuineness of the piety which filled the church, and spoke no bitter word against it. Religion, out of its very trust in God, had been betrayed into confidence that God would give bread without work; and no abusive epithet, but only the patient force of new example would teach a better wisdom. Altogether it was a company

of very remarkable and unusual men and women which laid the foundations of the spiritual fellowship that we have received from the past. Sagacious, broad-minded, clear-sighted, unselfish, and strong, they were as pure and able and useful as any equal number of people ever born into the world; and we cannot do better than cling to the spirit of their example.

The extremely modern mind is apt to think that they of that former time have been left far behind by reason of the new knowledge that has come into the world since their day. It is not so. This knowledge has to do for the most part with superficial and incidental things, and very slightly modifies the position they so heroically assumed. Some among us, being infected by the bad example of Christendom, which still makes so much of its battle of creeds, have wished to unfold a new standard of doctrine, and to summon a new army for intellectual combat under that banner.

But this is far from being a wise attempt. In the end it is almost sure to sacrifice everything that the fathers of our faith had gained. Practical righteousness now and always is man's supreme concern. As Christians, indeed, we are unworthy of the name we bear if by morality we mean nothing more than what is respectable in the common sight. But the righteousness which Christ taught, and which the mind lays hold of through faith in him; the life of the child of God here on the earth, who seeks to be perfect in his degree even as the Father in heaven is perfect,—this is the great business for which men ought to live; and neither the doctrines nor the practices of religion are entitled to much consideration, save as they shed light upon that problem or add strength to that endeavor.

Take, for example, the thought of Christ as it still appears to be held by many in the church, and as those who have been our teachers and guides would have that thought to be. To most Christian believers, perhaps, Christ is one who has saved them from spiritual shipwreck and death. Now there is nothing in our faith which calls upon us to deny the reality of the shipwreck, or to make light of the rescue which any soul believes to have been effected on its behalf. On the contrary, we are but shallow observers in this school of life, if we do not see how awful is the tragedy in which many human hearts are involved, and how great a thing it is when the endangered soul may feel that it has passed from death unto life.

But this we have a right to ask: Is it all you see and know of Christ that he has purchased redemption by his atonement for human sin? They who stand upon the breaking deck of a stranded ship do not care whether the life-savers whom they see upon the beach are short or tall, good men or bad men, in their private lives. All they care for is the fact that these men have the appliances for getting them safe ashore, and are there to use such means for that end. Being landed, they are of course profoundly grateful to their preservers who have saved them from a watery grave. But no one of them would think that because of this rescue he must take those hardy boatmen for his pattern and guide, to think their thoughts, adopt their manner of speech, and live the life by which they earn their daily bread. Yet in the case of Christ the great fact is that he was providentially raised up to be the light and inspirer and guide of a new and heavenly life. No matter how real the rescue effected through him from some primal curse that rested upon the sons

of Adam, the one consideration which can make that rescue seem worth while is that men should most earnestly devote themselves to following Christ's steps along the path of his higher life.

It used to be said of Unitarians that they had no Christ, because in their speech little was heard of being saved through him from everlasting torment. To those who made this charge, such salvation was practically the whole story of the Christian life. But the Unitarians had a Christ of immeasurably greater worth to themselves and to mankind than any of whom their accusers conceived; one who walked before their eyes in a pathway of unclouded light, close to the splendors of Deity, and who drew their very hearts after him to attempt something of the same sublimity. No more complete justification of their attempt to lift up in the common sight that divine man whom God sent to be a pattern of the perfect and complete humanity than the judgment recently pronounced from a distinguished orthodox pulpit, that the worship of Christ based on anything save his moral perfections is dangerous. Put that saying into positive form, and it represents exactly what this movement of ours stands for in religious history; that is to say, the worship and the cultivation of the moral perfections of Christ.

At least one may be sure that this is what Unitarianism meant in its origin, and I think no later counsel has been able to teach it a higher wisdom. Some people, no doubt, would be better pleased with a school of ethical culture which bore no distinctive name of any saint or hero of the spiritual life. But perhaps such people do not realize how different the ethics of the gospel are from the classic forms of the best pagan

life, or have not sufficiently allowed for the advantage of having the world's ideal embodied in one strong and beautiful personality, which can be held supreme over abstract definitions. At all events we have reason to say that there is slight hope of founding any permanent line of high spiritual endeavor much outside the course of the great stream of Christian belief and tradition; and, therefore, the purpose of our spiritual forbears to make that stream signify, above everything else, worship of the moral perfections of Christ, appears to me one of the loftiest and most far-reaching designs ever conceived of by the religious mind. There are many signs, too, that a hundred years of effort in this direction has been by no means labor in vain, and that great forces of spiritual development are now working everywhere to the same end.

In one respect alone should I be disposed to think that the men and women of this time had made substantial gain over the founders of our religious fellowship. As one reads the lives and letters of those who were at the front of that earlier generation, one is aware of a degree of watchful, strenuous, spiritual culture somewhat alien to the spirit of our own age. People then studiously and continuously disciplined not only their conduct, but their feelings and their thoughts, in a way that is not so habitual with us. It made their virtues fine and high, but also at times somewhat arrogant and cold. The higher ways of living did not entirely grow out of their inmost being, but were in part wrought into form and shape by the exercise of an iron will.

We live under different conditions,—on the whole rather less favorable to the growth of a strong indi-

vidualistic life, and rather as parts of a compact social mass. This means that, though people may believe themselves to be intensely intellectual, the present is beyond everything else, perhaps, an emotional period; for, when many minds are fused together in one common interest, these emotions are apt to be most strong. There never was a time when all the units of our human society stood so closely heart to heart, and when every sentiment of the hour had so wide a sweep through all ranks and classes of men. See how the whole world during some weeks of the past summer was watching, almost with bated breath, the daily and hourly progress of negotiations on which the question of peace or war between two great nations must turn! Our society has become like the closely packed audience at a play, which both laughs and weeps more easily than the single individual is like to do. This situation is attended by many perils. Above all we are exposed more helplessly to the enormous risk of sensationalism. But also this new manner of life brings vast increase of opportunity, for the strengthening of those nobler feelings and desires which make the richest source of human good.

The distinguishing characteristic of the mind of Christ was not any stern, cold sense of duty by which he was driven to unwelcome tasks, but the great passion of his soul for high and holy things, which made it his meat and drink to take up the work he was sent to do; and, if we have gained anything as a people, in recent years, of permanent spiritual worth, it is through the increase of those deep feelings of the heart which ought to bring new life and power to moral endeavor. Surely, the growth of sympathy throughout these later years has been most marked; and sym-

pathy is the beginning of that love which Christ has taught us to regard as the greatest of all cleansing streams opened in the world's life. The age lies before us increasingly ready to respond to the touch of whatever genuine love of peace and truth and righteousness we ourselves may feel. To this extent the world surely seems to be prepared for the coming of Christ's kingdom as never before.

The very rankness of the weeds now springing up in our garden of life tell of the wondrous fertility of the soil. The new and deeper knowledge of the mind of Christ being spread abroad in our time must produce a great harvest in days to come. Even so may his name and fame increase forever, that through him the will of God may be done among men till earth is made the real beginning of the kingdom of heaven.

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APR 12 1917

WHAT IS "EVANGELICAL"?

BY REV. AUGUSTUS P. RECCORD

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

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WHAT IS "EVANGELICAL"?

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Rom. i. 16.

"ARE Unitarians evangelical?" Our answer will depend upon what we mean by the word "evangelical." According to popular usage, it means agreement with the doctrines of a group of churches which have appropriated to themselves this name; but I am not concerned with the popular usage. The word "evangel" means good news. In our New Testament it is translated "gospel." As used by Jesus, it referred to his message, which he called the gospel of the kingdom. It was the glad tidings that the kingdom of God was at hand, and that it was every man's duty to repent and prepare himself to become a member of it. Thus the word "evangelical" may have two meanings. It may mean a message which is literally good news, or it may mean a message which is in accord with the teachings of Jesus as contained in the gospel narratives. In my judgment it should mean both.

Now what is the message to which certain churches have applied the term "evangelical"? Briefly stated, it is this: God consists of three persons united in one central Godhead. This God created man innocent and perfect. At the first real temptation this primitive man fell; and, by a sort of legal fiction, all mankind was involved in his fall. Hence man is born into

the world totally depraved, naturally inclined to all evil and opposed to all good. After centuries of fruitless striving, God sent forth his son, also a God, to be born of a virgin, and to reveal the way of escape, the plan of salvation. By his death on the cross he paid the penalty for the first man's sin; and by another legal fiction all mankind is permitted to share in this release upon one condition,—that of faith in the atoning merits of Jesus Christ. Those who accept this opportunity are saved and are ushered, at death, into eternal bliss. Those who reject it—and they constitute a large majority of mankind—are summoned before Christ upon the day of judgment, and are sent by him into the realms of endless woe.

Now apply to this message, with its wretched story of sin and failure and defeat, our twofold test. Is it good news? Is it possible for any man who should hear the story for the first time to accept it as glad tidings of great joy? Is it not rather a gospel of despair? There can be no better answer than the fact that the more intelligent and progressive orthodox ministers to-day repudiate the whole scheme as one of the grossest libels upon God and upon humanity ever perpetrated in the name of religion. Even if true, it is not good news. Again, is it in accord with the teachings of Jesus? On the contrary, it is in direct opposition to those teachings. It is a curious mixture of Hebrew myth and legend drawn from the Old Testament, and of Jewish theology borrowed from Saint Paul, and of pagan superstition derived from sources outside of the Bible, and all attributed to Jesus. Nowhere does Jesus speak of God as consisting of three persons. Nowhere does

he speak of himself as God. Nowhere does he mention the fall of man or the consequent depravity of human nature. Nowhere does he speak of his work as an atonement, or of his death as a penalty for man's sin. The simple fact is that, if Jesus were here to-day, and were to be judged by his teachings as contained in the four Gospels, he would not be eligible to sit in the councils of our so-called evangelical churches.

Furthermore, what passes as evangelical theology is not only opposed to the letter of Jesus' teachings, it is even more opposed to the spirit. His conception of the kingdom is patterned after the family rather than the state. God is a great and loving Father, who has sent men into the world to prove their divine parentage by the divineness of their daily living. He has infinite strength for their weakness, infinite sympathy with their striving, infinite compassion upon their shortcomings. When they sin, he punishes them with a father's firmness and a father's love. When they repent of their sins, he has for them only forgiveness and pardon. When their earthly life is over, he affords them an endless opportunity for growth toward the full stature of the sons and daughters of God. This is the gospel message, the glad tidings which Jesus announced, and the truth of which he demonstrated with his life. And this is the message of the Unitarian Church to the world of to-day.

We affirm with Jesus that God is our father, and that he cannot be less kind and just and loving than an earthly parent. As a revelation of his character, we prefer the parable of the Prodigal Son to the statements contained in the historic creeds. We affirm that human nature is not depraved, but im-

perfect. Every man is conscious of sinful tendencies, but he is not a sinner until he has sinned. Over against each sinful tendency there is an infinite capacity for moral and spiritual growth. Out from among the variety of conceptions of the life and work of Jesus, we select that which is most consistent with his life and teaching. We accept him as our moral and spiritual leader. He is not a God to be worshipped, but a guide to be followed. In accordance with his teaching, we regard salvation as dependent upon our own achievement, not upon our acceptance of a pardon purchased by the death of an innocent man. Righteousness is salvation here and hereafter. It follows that there can be but one destiny for the children of God. His eye is not darkened that it cannot see, neither is his hand shortened that it cannot save. Death does not mean to him what it means to us. All worlds are his, and all life is his; and, no matter where in his great universe he may send us, "we cannot drift beyond his love and care."

This, then, is our faith,—God our Father, man our brother, Jesus our leader, human life a progress in that Christ-likeness of character which is salvation, and human destiny that same progress continued throughout eternity. Is this evangelical? If we take the word literally, it certainly is; for it has brought glad tidings of great joy to men in all ages, and the world over. If we take the derived meaning as implying conformity to the teachings of Jesus, it is also evangelical, for it is more than conformity: it is practical identity. I sometimes think that the Liberal Church is the only Church which has any real right to call itself evangelical; for it is the only Church which has dared to preserve in all its simple beauty

the evangel which Jesus proclaimed in far-off Galilee,—the good tidings of the coming of the kingdom of God, and of man's fitness for citizenship therein. We are not ashamed of this gospel of Christ, and by our fidelity to it we are willing to be judged.

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Address communications and contributions to the

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25 BEACON STREET BOSTON, MASS.

[No. 208]

THE BIBLE IN THE LIGHT OF
MODERN THOUGHT

BY REV. HENRY WILDER FOOTE

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THE BIBLE IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN THOUGHT.

“And the writing was the writing of God.”—EXODUS xxxii. 16.

“The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”—2 COR. iii. 6.

JEHOVAH'S gift of the Tables of the Law to Moses has been regarded as an event of supreme significance by countless Jewish and Christian believers. History and art have pictured the prophet descending from Sinai, bearing in his hand the tablets of stone on which were written the veritable autographs of the Most High. The incident has in past ages been regarded as a strictly historical one. The reverence which the believing Jew paid to the Ten Commandments thus given has gradually been extended, first to the whole body of the law, then to the prophets, and finally, by Christians, to that collection of literature we call the Bible. Both for Protestants and Catholics it has been in a literal sense the word of God, dictated as it were, by the Almighty, to writers who were his passive instruments, human pens held in the Divine Hand.

Such a view of the Bible, with entire consistency, demands that it shall be taken as wholly and literally true. The Bible is regarded, not as an expression of the religious life, but rather as the foundation upon which alone true religion and morality can be built. We are all more or less familiar with this thought, and with the systems of theology which

depend upon it. Let me quote one explicit statement of it, found in a sermon preached at Oxford University about 1861.

"The Bible," said Dean Burgon, "is none other than the voice of him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every syllable of it (where are we to stop?), every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High. The Bible is none other than the Word of God,—not some part of it more, some part of it less, but all alike the utterance of him who sitteth upon the throne, faultless, unerring, supreme." This was the theory regarding the Bible which was held by nearly every one a hundred years ago, which is still held by a good many people. Without making any attempt to weigh its good and evil tendencies suffice it to say that it at least brought this good result,—almost every one was pretty well acquainted with the contents of the book.

Nowadays this doctrine of verbal inspiration is daily becoming more and more difficult to maintain. It is, of course, easy to ply its supporters with a host of catch questions about the numerous inconsistencies and contradictions to be found within the Bible itself. The doctrine is, however, being undermined far more effectively by the well-nigh universal absorption of scientific thought and adoption of scientific methods. Every school in the land teaches principles which are fundamentally inconsistent with it, every library offers books which disprove it ; every magazine publishes articles which cannot be reconciled with it. Multitudes who have been brought up in the ancient doctrine have come face to face with these difficulties. Beguiled by the

ery that the Bible must be "all true or all false," that they must "take the whole Bible or none," they have more or less consciously thrown overboard the book which they are no longer able to accept literally. Such action is the logical result of insistence upon this doctrine in the face of modern teaching. Many other people have ceased to read the Bible because it no longer interests them. They do not regard a knowledge and acceptance of its contents as necessary for their souls' welfare. It is an effort to try to understand it. Frankly speaking, it bores them, and the illustrated magazine and superficial novel offer an idler entertainment. Hence, a host of the younger generation are growing up in this country without knowing anything about the Bible, and therefore lacking an important element in a liberal education, no matter how good their training may be in other respects.

And yet this condition exists at a time when knowledge about the Bible was never on a firmer basis, nor more easily accessible. The nineteenth century saw a wonderful intellectual awakening. No part of that awakening has worked a greater transformation or been more significant in the history of religion than the developments arising from the deeper investigation of the Biblical records. It is perfectly safe to say that at no period since the books of the New Testament were written has there been such a thorough and reverent searching out of their origin, authenticity, and reliability. Probably at no period of equal length has there poured from the press a greater number of books representing every shade of opinion about the Bible as during the past quarter century. Not only do scholars know more, far more,

about the Bible than ever before, but the latest theories and arguments lie ready at the hand of all who care to read them. The older view of the Bible is passing away, slowly, but surely. But people are as yet in the transition stage when the newer knowledge about it is still largely unassimilated. In many cases they are indifferent because they do not understand, they do not read the Bible because they do not know how. What is needed is the awakening of an intelligent understanding of what the book really is. It is not intelligent to regard it on the one hand as a mere collection of fables which no longer concern us, nor on the other as a treasure-house stored with all the religious truth God has ever given to man. The reaction from the doctrine of verbal inspiration, which ascribed to the Bible qualities which it did not possess, has blinded many to the surpassing excellencies which really belong to it. The Bible is not a text-book of science nor a collection of verses, any one of which may be taken from its context to prove some wholly irrational hypothesis. The Bible is simply a great anthology. Between two covers we have put a selection of the best Hebrew literature,—myth, legend, and law; history and historical romance; love-song and hymn; the pessimist's cynicism and the prophet's sermon; letters, biographies, and rhapsodies. Almost every form of literature is there, ranging over some nine hundred years of time, representing widely differing stages of life and thought. It is as though a selection should be made of our English literature from Chaucer to Tennyson,—some old ballads, two or three plays of Shakespeare, brief histories of heroic moments in national life, a half dozen of the best ser-

mons and as many great speeches, chosen hymns, and poetry and essays. We are familiar enough with lists of the "100 best books." Could such a list be made authoritative, and set aside as especially sacred, we should have an English collection analogous to that of the Hebrews.

This composite literary quality of the Bible—the books, as the name originally meant—has been too little recognized. Partly this has been due to the ordinary methods of arrangement and printing, partly to the idea that all portions are equally inspired and equally valuable. The common shape in which the Bible comes to us is a relic of the early days of printing. The binding together of many badly arranged books in one volume, the arbitrary divisions into chapters and verses, and the generally mistaken chapter headings are inventions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They were necessities or conveniences then, and some of them are still conveniences for the student. But they are hindrances to the ordinary reader, and we are beginning to see the much-needed publication of editions* in which the text is freed from obstructions, and arranged for the comfort and convenience of the reader who is not interested in notes and cross-references. Such editions add much to an understanding of what one is reading. One comes to perceive that across the pages march many figures, widely varying ideals of God and man, of right and wrong, as well as differing types and ways of life. A recent writer describes it well:† "Here one may watch the growth of ideals

* Like the "Modern Reader's Bible," edited by R. G. Moulton, published by Macmillan, and the "Temple Bible," published by J. B. Lippincott.

† S. M. Crothers, "The Understanding Heart" p. 137.

of human greatness as the procession passes down the ages,—nomadic chieftains, wandering over the deserts and building altars by the way; border warriors, lifting hands yet red with blood in prayer to their tribal God; Oriental despots, passionate, vindictive, yet with a not unreal halo of sainthood around their heads; wild-eyed hermits, issuing from the fastnesses of the rock and pronouncing the doom of princes with a stern “Thus saith the Lord”; preachers of righteousness, denouncing alike the evils of temple and court and market-place, and declaring a God who despised burnt offerings and sought only the contrite heart; exiles in a far country, dreaming of the new king and the better country. At last, in the fulness of time, through numberless disappointments, the old ideals of earthly glory fade away, and the nation comes to recognize a new order of excellence, the excellency of a manhood clothed with humility and crowned with suffering, as Israel finds its highest ideal in ‘a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.’”

The Bible offers us, in truth, a unique study in the religious growth of a nation. In hardly another literature can we trace so clearly the development of national life and ideals. Certainly, no other compares with the Hebrew for clear illustration of the development of religious thought. We see the tribal heroes like Samson and Joshua worshipping the tribal deity. The religious ideals by the time of David have transformed that deity into the nation's God. The prophet's vision sees him as the Mighty Lord of all the earth, throned at Jerusalem, to whom all the nations will one day pay reverence. And, lastly, Jesus Christ teaches his disciples that the God who has been gradually thus

revealed is the Heavenly Father of all men. The thought of the slow but natural growth of the religious genius of the Jews explains much that has puzzled people in the Old Testament, as they have tried to reconcile the varying standards and ideals of right and wrong which have been too often declared to be equally authoritative.

Not only, of course, do the different books of the Bible reflect the thought of different ages and ways of life, but also the attitude and frame of mind of different individuals. Often we do not recognize that the New Testament offers us a similar growth of thought. The fact that we are presented with very differing views of Jesus is, of course, a commonplace to Biblical students, yet it is often only dimly felt by the average reader. In the first three gospels he is portrayed as the Galilean peasant who becomes the Messiah of Israel. His birth, his life, his teaching, his death, and his disciples' belief in his reappearance among them are told simply and earnestly. And then comes the apostle Paul with a different picture. He is not interested much in the earthly career of Jesus. All that he really cares about is to prove him the Christ because he has risen from the dead. By the resurrection he has overthrown the ancient Jewish law and opened salvation for all men who believe in him. Paul sets forth the risen Saviour, "the man Christ Jesus," whom God has lifted up to the right hand of glory. Thirdly, there is the conception set forth in the writings ascribed to John. Jesus to him also is the Christ, but the Christ is identified with the Logos, the Word. It is the attempted reconciliation of Jewish ideals to Greek philosophy. The portrait is serene, mystical, as a heavenly vision,

and wholly different from the other two representations of the Master. In the New Testament, as well as in the Old, we can trace a development of ideas and very differing points of view.

Let us recognize at once, then, that in these varying aspects of the Bible there may be much that no longer appeals to us. Indeed, why should there not be when we consider the variety of its contents and origin? Even the stanchest upholder of ancient doctrine recognizes this practice. Who even attempts to carry out the Jewish law? Are not all our children taught that the earth moves round the sun; that the latter has forever stood still; and not for a day only at Joshua's command? Let us recognize that there are abysses and sandy plains in the Bible, as well as mountain tops where one is close to heaven. "Deep calleth unto deep." We ought to read that which appeals to our heart, and skip the rest. The endless genealogies of the imagination, the books of law,—would you ever think of reading any other law book aloud at home?—the specifications of Solomon's temple, these are as profitless as Homer's Catalogue of the Ships, save to the research student. And in such parts as interest you there is much to choose. There is the choice between literature, pure and simple, and the writings of religious devotion; between shrewd proverbial philosophy and inspiring biography; between Paul's rabbinical arguments, which no longer come with power or persuasion, and the sayings of Jesus, which are flowing waters of life.

Perhaps enough has been said by a multitude of writers about the literary value of the Bible. It is not only a Hebrew classic, but an English one. To know the Bible thoroughly is alone a very fair

literary education. People nowadays sometimes deem our fathers to have had few educational opportunities. Yet, when one thinks of the thoroughness with which the older settlers of this country, especially the Puritans, knew their Bibles, that opinion must be modified. I am inclined to believe that the boy of 1704, who knew his Bible from cover to cover, had a better English training than his descendant two hundred years later, who knows nothing of its contents, even though he may have read a good deal of other literature. For it is impossible to read Shakespeare or Milton or Tennyson with understanding, unless one has some knowledge of that older literature which helped so greatly to mould their thought and form their style, and to which they all refer continually as a matter of course. It is impossible to appreciate the art of Christendom, to understand what Raphael and Michael Angelo and Perugino were trying to express, without a knowledge of the Bible stories which inspired so much of their work. All the long galleries of Europe are hung with Madonnas and St. John Baptists. On their walls Christ disputes with the doctors, or young Tobias journeys cheerfully through Media hand in hand with the angel. How much of meaning and beauty is lost to those who are unacquainted with at least the most familiar of those tales. No one without some knowledge of them can claim a liberal education, for they have transcended nationality and become a part of our Western civilization.

Much of those portions of the Bible which appeal to us to-day have a purely literary interest. Sometimes it is because of allusions to them in our own literature, sometimes because of their own beauty.

Take, for example, that exquisite romance of Isaac and Rebecca, that perfect idyl of Bedouin life, or the savage story of Siserah's death at the hands of Jael, and the exultant, taunting song of triumph that follows. In these there is no religious teaching for men and women of to-day,—only artistically perfect pictures of a life far away in time and thought. Many of these passages do but show the childhood of a race. They are ideal children's stories still, which it is an irreparable loss for the children of to-day not to know. Then there are those passages which begin to embody religious teaching, all unconsciously. What more exquisite way of telling a child of God's presence in the darkness of the night about him than to read him the story of little Samuel in the Temple? How better let him understand his father's sorrow, if he shall go down to sin and death, than by reading the story of Absalom, or teach him that there is forgiveness after wrong-doing, than by that noblest of parables, the Prodigal Son? These all are tales which should be dear to every child, and by them he may absorb simple, deep religious truths, and gain a blessed acquaintance with the best literature in English.

The Scriptures which are chiefly literary merge by imperceptible degrees into those which are chiefly devotional. Because of the religious genius of the Hebrew race they attempted to draw no such false distinction between profane and sacred history as has been too common with Church historians. To the writer of the "Wars of Jehovah" or the biographer of the Kings of Israel all history was sacred, because it recorded the dealings of God with his chosen people. Therefore, the lives of Saul and David, and

their successors, like all noble biographies, contain a profound religious teaching. As in the case of the earlier heroes of Israel, their standards, both religious and moral, are not suited for our imitation. But there remains from the study of their most human characters much that were well heeded to-day. We are not so far from Oriental despotism that both trades-union and trust promoter might not profit from the perusal of the incident of Ahab and Naboth's Vineyard.

It is, however, when we come to the more truly devotional portions of the Bible that we find the great source of its power and permanence. It is in reality the world's masterpiece of devotional literature. It is the expression of a national experience of sin and repentance, of sorrow and suffering, of hesitating allegiance to high ideals. In it the crude and ignoble mingle with the loftiest and best. But through it runs the strain of truest piety and of splendid aspiration. Here, again, the individual will choose according to his heart's need. Some will read the rhapsodies of the second Isaiah and Jesus' Discourse at the Last Supper, as reported by John. Some will turn to the more practical questionings of Job and to the Sermon on the Mount. Some in that great hymn-book, the Psalms, will pick out the unsurpassed songs of the spirit, leaving behind those fierce denunciations of one's enemies which still disfigure many Church services, contrary as they are to the spirit of Christianity.

A word more about this use of the Bible. There is a way of reading it which ought to grow on one. The deepest poetry, the tenderest, most thrilling music, are not wholly grasped or understood at the

first hearing. It is only gradually that one sees into the deeper meanings. These great passages of the Bible do not render all their strength and sweetness to the casual passer-by. The untried, happy youth or one who glances along the page with the skimming flight of the hasty novel reader often utterly fails to note them. They are good enough to be really read, yes, and to be read again. Probably no one untouched by the deeper sorrows, temptations, and losses of life really knows how the voices of that antique past, voices of prophet, saint, and sinner, can answer with comfort and consolation out of their own experience. And there are other voices besides those of consolation, voices of strength and inspiration and examples of heroic living. Men, our brethren, have gone before us and left their wisdom and their cheer behind. Into what sudden life these figures leap, read in the true spirit of a vivid human experience,—no longer chessmen moved back and forth at the dictation of the “Master of the Play” for our edification. They wrote of passionate, pulsing life, they were prejudiced, partisan, eager, yet writing with the inspiration of the Divine in their hearts, that inspiration which God breathes into every man who lifts his fellows to a vision of the things above. The ancient out-worn letter of doctrine killeth, but the spirit of an understanding heart gives new life to these truths of the soul’s depths.

In truth, like all the simplest, deepest things of life, one reads the Bible more with the heart than with the intellect. We do not need to be “Higher Critics” ourselves to read it intelligently. The date of the latest fragments of Deuteronomy or the authorship of the Fourth Gospel offer fields for profound

investigation of the greatest interest. But no discoveries about them will bring a re-enforcement of the Mosaic law or lessen the spiritual beauty of the Gospel according to John. In reading the Bible as a means of deepening one's religious life it is interesting to know the theories of its date and authorship, but it is by no means essential. Many a reader who could not guess the date of the Book of Job within five hundred years of the time of its origin has been guided by its reflections toward the place "where wisdom is found." Many whose minds have been sadly perplexed about the theological aspects of the New Testament have found in the words of Jesus light in the dark places of their lives. Let us use what aids we can find to guide our reading, but let us not think that we must be Biblical critics before we begin.

The time is coming when there must be a revival of interest in the Bible among those who now neglect it. It is too fundamental a part of our literature to lie unread. It is too noble a body of devotional writing not to appeal to tired, disheartened humanity. We already live in a period of unprecedented study among scholars of all that can throw light upon it. It has been pointed out that such periods of Biblical study have been "followed by great social and religious movements, as in the time of Wycliffe, Tyndale, and the Authorized Version."* The world of Christian thought is still undergoing a tremendous transformation, the extent of which is seldom realized, the like of which Christendom has perhaps never seen. We have doubtless entered upon a new epoch in religious history, greater than any which has gone before,

* W. W. Fenn, "The Bible in Theology," p. 24.

in which old landmarks are being obliterated, and new, enlarging interpretations of the religious life are being formulated. As we pass away from the old bondage of the letter into the gradual acceptance of what is virtually a new Bible, doubtless there will follow another great movement of religious enlightenment and zeal. The spirit which animates the Bible read in this new light is one of inspiration and life. We cannot lose, we must not set aside that great book which has helped such multitudes in the past. Within its covers there remain light and comfort and inspiration for the coming centuries. The great expression of the religious life of the Hebrews echoes on into our hearts to guide and stimulate us in the realization of a faith broader and truer than theirs of old.

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DIVINE BECAUSE HUMAN

BY REV. ULYSSES G. B. PIERCE

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DIVINE BECAUSE HUMAN.

"And the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. . . . And he called Baruch, and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord. . . . And they asked Baruch, saying, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth? Then Baruch answered them, Jeremiah pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book."—JEREMIAH xxxvi. 4, 17, 18.

"Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then doth he now say to us, I am come down from heaven?"—JOHN vi. 42, 43.

AT first thought the connection between these two texts, one from the Old Testament and the other from the New, is remote; but upon further thought it will be observed that they both reflect the same trait of mankind. Both reveal the difficulty we feel as we consider religion at close range, the disenchantment we suffer when we discover how a thing is done.

Jeremiah was shut up in prison; but, as the old poet has said, "Stone walls do not a prison make," and even in jail Jeremiah had thoughts,—or, as he expressed it, "The Lord spoke to him." So he calls his secretary, and dictates to Baruch, the stenographer of his day, the message that Jeremiah feels impelled to send to the people of Judah. Baruch waits his opportunity, and when in a public festival or feast day the people are all gathered, Baruch gets their ear and reads the message which he has taken from

the mouth of Jeremiah. But instead of acting on that message, the king destroys it, showing his appreciation. The princes, next in rank, do the next dishonorable thing. They say to him, "Why, you say that this is a message from the Lord." "Yes." "Well, how did you get it?" "Oh, Jeremiah spoke it to me, and I took out my ink horn and my stylograph, and I wrote it down from his mouth." "Yes, but I thought you said it was a message from the Lord; but you have just said that you wrote it with ink in the book."

That is the thing that comes to the modern man. "I thought," he says, "that this was God's word, and yet come with me and I will show you how it was made. I thought that man was the son of the Living God, yet come to the museum and I will show you the story of his evolution. I thought that religion was a divine impulse, yet I can open Tyler's 'Anthropology' and 'Primitive Culture,' and show you the evolution of this fine sentiment. I thought that the high Scriptures of the world were the living, breathing, pulsating word of God, yet, as a higher critic, I can analyze and divide hair from hair, and can show you who wrote it with his ink horn in the book."

So much for the old text. Jesus was living among the people, and was trying to impress them with this Old Testament truth, that "the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." So, in bold figure, Jesus says: "I am not my own: I am not come here to do my own will and to seek my own pleasure. The physical part of me is only half. I am come down from heaven." That is enough. The critic, whose name is

legion, says: "Look here, you say that you are come down from heaven. Are we mistaken about the man? Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, the carpenter, over there in the humble little village of Nazareth? Do we not know Mary, his mother? Do we not know Joseph, his father? Do we not know all about this man? And now he says, forsooth, that he came down from heaven!"

Do you not see how history repeats itself? Here is the old attitude of men in the days of Jeremiah, in the days of the Nazarene, in our own day,—men who are blinded to the spirituality and the divinity of the world, because they put their eye on processes, not sources and causes; men who think that a Scripture cannot be a word of God, because they have found the pen and have analyzed the ink with which it was written; those who think that man is not a child of the living God because they happen to know a part of his physical genealogy. So this is the thing I want to speak of briefly; namely, the difficulty that comes to the modern man of interpreting the world spiritually in view of the known scientific facts before us.

We read in the Bible that "in the beginning was God," and that he made the heavens and the earth,—a delusion under which many people have lived and died. We emancipate ourselves from that delusion, as we think, and say: "God is no longer necessary; we have discovered the ink horn by which this book, this great scroll, was written. We have discovered that Joseph and Mary were the forerunners of this Jesus. We have discovered the nebula, the star dust, of which this world is the evolutionary product. That satisfies our mind perfectly." Do you not see

how even in our own day we get processes so near our eyes that we repeat this same old mistake of thinking that the discovery of a method is the discovery of a cause? I must at once correct myself, because it is only the small mind that thus speaks. The great mind entertains no such misconception. Take, for instance, the verdict of a man like Tyndall, who, I suppose we should at once say, had no religious prejudices in favor of the older view of things. But he says, "Evolution cannot explain—it does not profess to explain—the origin of anything." Granted that the star-dust has in it potential life, the mystery which is back of it still bewilders and confuses us.

It is to recall that mystery that religion comes into the world. It is to drive us back to first sources, and to relieve our minds of the childish conceit that because we know the banks of a river we know its source and its destiny. No. The Tyndalls and the Spencers and the Huxleys—the men who have most uncompromisingly accepted the modern point of view—have bowed their minds before the mystery which opens before them, and, if they have not called it God, it is simply because they preferred some other word; but the feeling that was in their mind was one of religious awe, as they stood in the presence of this inscrutable Mystery.

Let us go one step further. While it is not an objection that many of us now feel,—for the truth has become acclimated and seasoned in our minds,—yet there are some of us who still feel a difficulty in reconciling the known humble origin of man with his spiritual sonship to the heavenly Father. We say to ourselves, "Yes, we know all about this; we know about the *Pithecanthropos*, way back in the tropical forest; we

know how gradually fear came upon him, love, discontent; by and by aspiration; and we know how, through these millions of years, we have a Socrates, a Plato, a Jesus." But we do not know,—that is the trouble,—we do *not* know. We are not half so sure of those things as in our childish thought we imagine. Because we know the Josephs and Marys, it does not follow that man does not come down from heaven. Says the least sentimental of British poets, Matthew Arnold:—

"Since man woke on earth, he knows his story;
But, before we woke on earth, we were."

Certainly there is no process by which a Socrates can be evolved out of star-dust, until some power has *involved* Socrates into the star-dust. "Something from nothing you cannot take." It is as good theology and philosophy as it is mathematics. We have simply discovered a few of the human relationships, and the wise man still bows his head and puts with this statement of Joseph and Mary, the other, "I am come down from heaven." Yes, *because* we know his father Joseph, and his mother Mary. Yes, the two go together. You will let those words linger in your mind. There is a certain justifiable satisfaction in a man reading those words, and being told out of Holy Writ that the Nazarene had the full inheritance of a father as well as a mother. "Do we not know his father Joseph and his mother Mary?" And so he was born of the Holy Spirit, because he had a father and a mother. The natural process is the divine process, which we cannot see, but which we perceive by faith.

Or, to carry our illustration,—for it is not an argument,—to carry our illustration a little further, I think

we can feel the objection which even such men as Spencer have made against the spiritual origin of religion. It has practically been said: "This thing that you call a spiritual power in the world, we know all about. We have analyzed the ink with which it is written; we have seen the pen; we found it; we know how this thing came about; we know that religion, instead of being an intuition, a divine impulse, first arose in fear; that the first god that men worshipped was the god of thunder, and the blazing lightning; and that these finer emotions that you associate with religion are the flowering of that sentiment; but that originally, with the cave-dweller and the troglodyte, fear was the only religion which men knew. How then do you say that religion is a spiritual relationship, when we can thus show you the Joseph and the Mary and the Baruch who was the instrumentality of it all?"

We have to admit all those facts. Rather we do not *have* to: we want to, simply because they are the truth in the case. But the true symbol, the true illustration, perhaps, is like this: How comes it about, if the maternal instinct in woman is so strong, if after all it is the thing which moves and rules this world,—how comes it about that the child expresses it through a doll? You say this instinct is a spiritual instinct, that it is the most divine thing in the world, and yet here is the child playing with her doll. Yes, because she is a child, and the instinct is just awakening, and will give her no rest until she have some expression of that impulse. Then comes the period of pets,—the cat, the dog, the squirrel, the bird; then the period of companionship; then of the great choice in life; and then, again, in a manger, the story begins anew on a higher level. Must we go back again to the Nazarene

to remind ourselves that religion is not a machine, but an organism? "The kingdom of heaven is like this, like that: it is like something that grows," he always says. "It is first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." Why, we have no need to dig up Tyler. We know, *a priori*, that religion must begin in the simplest fashion, that it is like the light which comes into your house. You put in a blue glass, and a blue light comes in. In the primitive condition of man's mind, his perception has a blue glass over it. It admits, from the white light of God's presence, only the rays which we call fear. By and by he substitutes a red glass, and there comes in passion, enthusiasm, self-immolation, self-sacrifice, martyrdom. By and by the green-colored glass, and at last no glass at all; and the blue and the red and the violet, and every color of the human spectrum, come into the mind as white light. So you do not analyze your feelings of fear; you do not analyze enthusiasm and self-sacrifice; you simply recognize religion as the impulse of your life. It is spiritual, not in spite of this lowly origin: it is spiritual *because* we can trace these things and see that it has grown in an orderly fashion. This is its credential, and we accept these words of Jeremiah not in spite of the fact that they were written with ink, but *because* they were written with ink. It is the way other things are written. We accept the Nazarene as an incarnation of the Spirit from heaven, not in spite of the fact that he had father and mother, but because of that; and any absence of that would shake our faith in his spiritual ancestry.

We have been trying to see how the evolution theory of the world and of man and of religion does not do away with the necessity for coming back to the spiritual source of things. Lastly, I beg you to look for a moment

at psychology, and see how true it is. The things that we do not know would, as has been said, fill a large book. Let us admit it. The psychologist says: "Oh, yes, I can understand how all these things came about. I know that, when the brain is surcharged with blood, why, then a man feels music, he sees beauty, and he speaks poetry. And, if I had the time, I could do it myself." But they never do it. "The way of man is not in himself." How often we forget that! "The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Of the evolution of that crude function of the mind and spirit that we call *brain*, we know a little; but of the power which is back of that, and uses that as the hand uses a tool, we know no more than Jeremiah did. The tides of the spirit rise and fall, and we are ever in the presence of this great mystery. Who knows but after all the Semitic people were right in dignifying a great thought by calling it "the word of God." They did not say, "I think." Jeremiah said, "The Lord says so-and-so to me." Who shall say that they were not right? But the modern man feels that somehow there is a clash, there is an antagonism here, because he can for a little way trace the mechanical process; and he repeats the verdict of those foolish princes: "What do you mean by saying that this is the word of the Lord? Why, you just admitted Baruch, that you wrote the thing down with your own pen, and you made many scratches and erasures. You made some mistakes, and yet you say that it is the word of the Lord!" Yes, *because* of that. We do not need to go back thousands of years. This mystery is before us always. What the Bible says is verifiable by almost any man's experience. "For the word of Scripture, of prophecy," says Peter, "came not by the will of man;

but holy men—holy men—spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” That does not explain it, that explains nothing. I think sometimes the business of religion is to cure this mania that we have for explaining things. If we could only convince ourselves that this moment we are in the presence of the inscrutable Power. If for one moment, with Spencer, we could bow our heads before the Unknowable, it might be the most wholesome thing for us. We know so little of it. How does it come about,—not speaking of Moses, of Jeremiah,—how does it come about that Wordsworth visits Tintern Abbey with his sister, is impressed with that pastoral scene, and then, when he reaches Bristol, writes down one hundred and fifty verses that are immortal—that sang themselves into his mind without any trick at rhyme or rhythm? Simply because it is true that “it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”; that these things come not by the will of man, but by this mysterious power. Is it less mysterious when you turn to his “Ode on the Intimations of Immortality”? Is it less mysterious because there you know that two years elapsed between the first line and the last line? Is it any less an inspiration because it took two years? No. Then you are forced to recognize that your work as a historian, as an investigator or a scientist, is not wholly your work. You are a channel through which things are flowing, and your purpose is to make your mind a screen, to screen out the unworthy things and to let the true things come through. Yes, the true psychologist, after all, is the poet, and we are driven to this mystery, not because it is in an old Bible, but because it is the experience of holy men now. Listen to these simple lines from the poet of our choice,—Longfellow. He ought to know something about psychology, but he

says in almost so many words, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps":—

As the birds come in the Spring,
We know not from where;
As the stars come at evening
From the depths of the air;

So come to the Poet his songs,
All hitherward blown
From the misty realm, that belongs
To the vast Unknown.

His, and not his are the lays
He sings; and their fame
Is his, and not his; and the praise
And the pride of a name.

For voices pursue him by day,
And haunt him by night,
And he listens, and needs must obey,
When the Angel says, "Write!"

From the vast Unknown! Yes, that is where all things come from. "Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above." And we have not "explained" Longfellow when we have found his corrected manuscript, and have seen the pen and ink with which it was written.

And do you say, "What is the use of all these?" Only this. To drive home to us the conviction that we are living in God's world; that God is here; that the world of fact and experience and experiment is the world of God. To discover certain processes by which the material world floated before our vision does not alter the fact that God is behind it,—in it. "Thou couldst not have sought me," says Saint Augustine,— "thou couldst not have sought me, unless thou hadst already found me." Evolution involves involution. Man

is the child of God because he has come so slowly. Religion is a spiritual power, not in spite of its lowly origin, but because we can trace its absolutely natural growth. Inspiration is not a miracle. It is a law of life: it is the brooding of the Spirit upon the waters of **man's** mind.

May not this drive us home, friends, to a more humble, to a more tender and a more kindly attitude toward our whole life? Is not here, as a matter of fact, the Burning Bush before which we may take off our shoes? Here is the world, forever being involved, never finished,—force always being manifested and expended, but never spent; religion always doing its marvelous works, yet doing more and more marvels; the living Spirit, the vast Unknown, speaking to men still in a thousand voices: “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother?” Yes, we do. And *because* we know his father and mother, we know that he came down from heaven. For the ladder that leads from earth to heaven is the ladder of human relationships, and thank God that to be of the earth is also to be of the heaven, and to be a child of Joseph and Mary is to be a child of the living God.

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FIVE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF OUR FAITH

BY REV. CHARLES W. CASSON



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FIVE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF OUR FAITH.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

A BABE lies in its cradle. At first it is only vaguely conscious of a great, looming figure above it, as its father leans over the cradle side. It looks and wonders. Later, it becomes conscious of the personality of the presence, as one distinct and apart from all others. Then it looks and knows. But there comes a time in the development of that child when it recognizes the parentage of the personality, and when its baby mind conceives the new thought and its baby lips form the new word "Father." Henceforth, it looks and knows and loves.

And in humanity's childhood men first were conscious of the looming presence of God, a something mysterious and mighty. Then they learned the further fact of personality, that God was a being separate and single, majestic and monarchical. But in the evolution of the race there came a time when the person became revealed as the parent, and the fact and force of God were merged into his Fatherhood.

We believe in the Fatherhood of God. We believe him to be infinite, omnipotent, universal. We give him all homage as the Creator, Continuer, and Controller of all life. We acknowledge his majesty, might, mystery. But under the splendor of his majesty we perceive the smile of his love; in the

greatness of his might we know the gentleness of his providence; amid the shadows of the mystic fact we hold the simple surety of the Fatherhood of God.

We believe this in a very real sense. It is more than a definition, a simile, a figurative term. It is a fact. We are very children of God by birth and being. We are not creatures of the clay, but kinsmen to the spiritual Infinite. God is our Father, giving to us the life, nature, and heritage of the divine. We are bound to him by the bond of being as well as by the tie of love. As truly as our male parent is father in the flesh, God is Father in the spirit.

Only the liberal church can consistently believe in the Fatherhood of God as a real and vital fact. According to orthodoxy, God had an "only begotten" son. He alone, if the phrase means anything, was the legitimate child of God, having full claim to the title. He alone by birth and being belongs to the family. So far as mankind is concerned, its parentage is imputed to the evil one. All men are "conceived in sin and born in iniquity." If this be true, mankind stands outside the family circle of God, having only the hope of being mercifully adopted and of enjoying the care of a foster father.

But with such a limited application of the term, the principle is not worth the proclamation. It degrades mankind and is a slur upon the race. It grants us a concession that we believe belongs to us as a right. Rather are we sons, not by the accommodation of name, but by the actuality of nature. We are not adopted, but born into the family. As liberals, we proclaim the principle in all its fact and fulness.

Because of this belief, our fear of God is lost in our faith. He is not alien and apart from us. He is

very near and very dear to us. We approach him, not as subject to King, not as alien to Autocrat, not as beggar to Benefactor, but as child to Father, having clear claim to his love and care. Our prayer is not the plea for God's divine charity: it is the reaching forth for our own divine right.

Three little brothers were once walking along a dark road. Presently they heard the sound of footsteps ahead, as of some one approaching them. They began to be afraid; and, as a form loomed up in the dusk, the younger ones began to cry. But the eldest, with greater courage, kept his eyes fixed upon the approaching form; and finally, as it came nearer, he recognized the person, and, turning to his little brothers, exclaimed in joy, "Don't cry, it's father!" And in the darker days of the past, when humanity feared God, as it crouched in his felt presence, there was one, Jesus, whose clear, brave eyes beheld the truer fact, and who, catching a glimpse of the face of deity, turned to his brethren and proclaimed the Fatherhood of God. And we, living centuries afterward, have entered the glorious consciousness of the same splendid truth.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

A little miss and I, walking home one day from Sunday-school, talked about the lesson on brotherhood that she had just learned. It had evidently made a deep impression on her; for, after telling me about it, she said, "Then you are my brother." "Yes," I replied. "And that man," pointing to a man on the other side of the street, "is my brother." Again I assented. We walked on in silence for a

little. Just in front of us was a Chinaman, grotesque and foreign-featured. Jeannie looked at him long, and finally said, as the evident outcome of her thought, "Then he must be my brother also." And I knew that she at least had learned the lesson of brotherhood.

It is just that lesson that we, as Unitarians, seek to learn and teach. The principle of brotherhood is the sure sequence of the principle of fatherhood. They who are children of the same Father must necessarily be brothers. There is no alternative, no avoidance of the inevitable inference. If we would call God Father, we must call man brother. Our second principle is the companion truth of the first, and in no way can they be dissociated.

This term is an inclusive one. The human race is included in its wide scope. There are no exceptions, from whatsoever cause. It is not limited to those we love or know. We may not shut out from the circle the low, the unfamiliar, the despised. The circle is as broad as human life. There lives no man, of any color, creed, caste, condition, character, who may rightly be excluded from the circling bond, and who has not full claim to the full rights of the brotherhood of man.

Such is the breadth and beauty of brotherhood. Such is the bond that binds man to man. It overlooks differences of degree and doctrine; it eliminates boundary lines of strife and separateness; it penetrates the surface of form and reveals the significance of fact; it brushes aside the paltry divisions of racial and religious prejudice, and blends the whole race in a common brotherhood. Every man becomes a kinsman, and the whole world a home.

A Federal soldier was in the firing line in a battle of the Civil War. Amid the smoke and din of the conflict he kept on loading his piece and firing at the approaching enemy. The opposing line came nearer, and the soldier aimed at a foremost figure. Just then the smoke lifted for a moment, and he recognized the one he was about to shoot as his brother, who had lived in the South and had joined the Confederate forces. Just in time the revelation came. The trigger was not pulled, and, where a moment before foes fought, brothers met.

In the strife of life to-day we meet each other too often as foemen. We imagine that life is a struggle for existence, and that we are justified in our selfish jostling of our fellow-men. Business becomes a battlefield, and Love is an angel that hovers on the outskirts, to pity when the fight is over. But, believing in the brotherhood of man, we must also accept the social sequence of the principle. In the face of the foe we behold the features of the friend. And with the revelation of this fact we stand for a new social ideal, in which men shall no longer strive as self-seekers, but shall co-operate as friends and brothers all.

THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS.

A picnicking party, in the course of the day's adventures, descended a very deep and precipitous ravine. After exploring the bottom, they looked in vain for the way to ascend. High above showed a blue streak of sunlit sky, but no path to reach it. Most spent their time in regretting or in theorizing. Some were quite hopeless. But one of the number, more enterprising and wise, went apart, searched

every cranny and corner and cliff, and finally found a narrow path that led to the upper plain. Coming back, he informed the party, and under his guidance all were soon in safety and sunshine upon the higher level.

Twenty centuries ago humanity lived on the low level of selfish life. The atmosphere was chill, the scope narrow, the limits oppressive. High above it humanity caught momentary glimpses of the brightness of the ideal and the beauty of a higher and holier life. Finally, a young man determined that he should ascend. So he went apart from his fellows, and after long years of search found a pathway that led upward into the sunshine. He returned to the multitude below, told it of his discovery, and tried to induce it to make the ascent. But the multitude would not believe his report, but put him to death. He died; but his message lived, and the way upward had been marked out for the feet of future men. That young man was Jesus of Nazareth.

What avails it if the world, regretting his death, should deify him, build countless temples in his name, and make merit of his brave death? What avails it if Christendom has pinnacled him in the highest, and made him very God? One fact remains, and the fact of supremest import. The path he pointed out is still there, leading from vice to virtue, from shadow to sunshine, from degradation to divinity. It is the path of the love-life. He who will may tread it. He who would follow the leadership of Jesus *must* tread it.

The leadership of Jesus may mean more to the Unitarian than to any other. Those who make him deity set an impossible task before mankind. If you tie

a log to one man and a balloon to another, and bid them both rise, you are not more unjust than are they who command a finite man to follow the example of the infinite God. But to believe in his being human like ourselves is to be given new hope and courage. What he has done, we can do; where he has gone, we can go; what he has accomplished, we can achieve. He leads, and we may follow.

A boy stood on the street corner of an Italian city, playing a violin. The boy was young, the instrument was ill-tuned, the strains were not attractive. The people passed by without responding to his appeals. A celebrated violinist happened along, and, pityingly, took the violin from the boy. After tuning its strings, he began to play. As the perfect music filled the air, the crowd heard, stopped, gathered around, responded. And when the violin was handed back to him, the boy took it with a new reverence and a new hope. That the old instrument was capable of such divine music he had never dreamed.

And Jesus showed to us the harmonies of which the instrument of human nature was capable. Tuning it to the keynote of love, he played so sweet a song that in twenty centuries we have not forgotten its beauty. And the same instrument lies in our hands to-day. From it, if we follow the leadership of Jesus, we shall draw the same exquisite strains of the song of the love-life.

SALVATION BY CHARACTER.

A flower grows in the open field. It has within itself certain potential powers. There is a living energy that gives it life and growth. There is a law of its **being** that communicates itself to every minutest

cell, and directs its evolution along certain lines. The flower is saved from imperfection and becomes the perfect bloom by obedience to that inner law.

A soul, like a seed, has within itself certain inherent powers. There is a designed perfection of life possible to both men and flowers. In order to attain it, there must be obedience to the law of God. It becomes the religious business of life to save one's self from the imperfect and incomplete. Salvation is the attainment of the best and the God-intended in character.

Salvation thus is a natural process. It is the out-working in life of law. It is the development of character. There is nothing artificial about it. There is no supernatural magic by which a stunted stalk can become at once a perfect blossom, or a stunted soul be saved in a moment or by a single act from meanness and imperfection. Salvation is strength, and strength comes by the exercise of our diviner faculties. Salvation is growth, and growth comes by the yielding to the impulse of God in law. Salvation is perfection, and perfection comes by perfect obedience. And strength, growth, and perfection become manifest in character.

Salvation, then, comes less by faith than by force, less by belief than by being, less by the confession of a creed than by the character of a life. It is not a rope let down from above, so much as a vine growing upward from below. It is the daily doing of the helpful deed. It is the upward and outward reaching of the aspiring soul. It is that process by which we build strong, good, noble character.

The different sects might be likened to ticket-sellers. One claims that only a red ticket will admit one to the glories of heaven. Another makes similar claim

for the white ticket, while a third warns his hearers to have none but a blue one. If we have any part in the proceeding, it is to proclaim to the anxious crowd the single and simple message: "Friends, it isn't the color of the ticket that counts. It is the cleanness of the hand that knocks for admission."

THE PROGRESS OF MANKIND ONWARD AND UPWARD FOREVER.

We believe in evolution as an eternal force in all life, hence we believe in the progress of mankind. For untold millions of years life on this planet has been struggling upward to assume new and higher forms. Not a day has passed in ten million years but life was higher at sunset than at dawn. With infinite slowness, but with infinite sureness, a subtle power has been at work in the clay, shaping, purifying, perfecting. From amœba to man the pathway ran, up which life has made its age-old ascent.

And to-day, in the life of modern men, the principle is still actively at work. By the irresistible impulse of God mankind is still making ascent toward higher levels and nobler life. Eternal progress is the purpose and privilege of life. As surely as the tides of the ocean rise, so surely is mankind caught in the resistless uplift of the power of God.

Hence it becomes man's duty to accept new conditions, new conceptions, new commands. Religion deals with the present. Truth is not so much an echo from the ancient past, as it is a living voice in modern time. Revelation is the ray direct, not a mere reflection. Each new day brings a new truth and a new task. The facts or faith of any other age cannot

suffice for this. Truth assumes new forms to fit the mental growth of man. The living truth cannot be caught in the meshes of a creed. Creeds are but the lifeless husk of the nut, from which the kernel has escaped to become the living, growing, branching tree.

We believe in the wisdom and the duty of that divine discontent that shall stir us ever to new life and nobler endeavor. What has been done in the past we can do in the present, and we can do more. It is our religious duty to make perpetual progress in thought, life, liberty, and love.

We believe in the immortality and the eternal progress of the soul. This present existence is only a period and a part of life total. Death is but the gateway through which the soul shall pass to life eternal. The path we tread goes on forever and forever. Our feet touch the clay only that we may prepare for still higher flight. The root life of the present shall sometime blossom into the flower of the immortal. Death is the winter that may blast the leaf, but may not touch the life that made the leaf, and shall make others in the summers yet to come.

Leaving Queenstown for Niagara Falls by trolley, the road at first turns and twists in the strangest possible way. Time and again it runs directly toward its starting-point. One's first thought is that the engineer who planned the road must have been demented. But by and by one realizes that every turn and twist brings the car either onward or upward, and that as a result the high level soon is reached, and the rails run straight to their destination.

And often it seems as though life were chaotic, unplanned, unguided. Crises come, evils devastate,

wrong triumphs, chaos prevails. Nations are caught in the surge of social revolution, and old orders are swept under and out. But we believe that by every surge and swell of life, social, political, industrial, God's purpose moves to its fulfilment, and that by every swinging cycle of evolution or revolution mankind makes progress onward and upward forever.

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“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

APR 12 1917

GOOD TIDINGS.

BY ELLEN S. BULFINCH.

Great truths lie hidden beneath all sincere religious beliefs, but it is indeed good tidings of great joy that the Unitarian faith brings to the world to-day. The past century has seen marvellous things discovered and accomplished, and in this new age people look for fresh expressions of religious thought, that shall be more in harmony with the grandeur of the universe and more truly represent what the great teachers of our race in every age have tried to show us concerning divine things. There are some who think of the Creator of this wonderful world and life of ours as being displeased with his children, and only turned from his anger by the sacrifice of an innocent Christ. To such we say that we believe God to be a loving Father, as Jesus of Nazareth said, and that he is gradually bringing us forward, step by step, and age by age, out of chaos and the dark, up to the glorious liberty of his perfect children. He is not only, in the words of Herbert Spencer, "the One Absolute Certainty," "the Inscrutable Existence everywhere manifested," "the Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed," but he stands in the closest and most loving relation to each soul, ready to respond to the slightest motion towards himself, and to be its heavenly Friend and Almighty Guide,—in very truth, "the Companion of Paradise." He puts into

our hands, by degrees, the tools we need to do our work with here on the earth. He leads us to find out how to use his different gifts, such as light, heat, the electric current, the X-ray, etc., and how to apply the great laws which govern the outward phenomena around us, and also the world of mental activity within. One by one we make these discoveries, and we believe that finer forms of matter and new laws governing whole regions of action and of thought unknown to us now, are patiently biding their time, ready to reward our search some day, and surprise us with their power and beauty. Through prayer, the natural language of the heart, we can speak to the All-powerful One, and we feel sure that he hears us, and loves to bestow his "good gifts" upon us, though he may not, in his wisdom and his deep affection, always give us what we, in our blindness, would ask. Our belief in this Eternal Father calls upon us to live as he would have us live, in harmony with his majestic laws, in purity and simplicity of heart and of life, in a confidence which knows no fear, and a courage which he is ready to sustain from day to day by his own exhaustless energy. He will help us to attain the serene spirit by which we can do all things, "as to the Lord, and not unto men," who will often disappoint us, and he will reward us with the joy which the child of God sometimes feels when called to lonely and difficult tasks that remove us from human companionship, either in order to study God's marvellous laws and understand them better in solitude, or to bear some heavy burden of caring for his children, obscure to us perhaps, but in which we can feel that we have his blessing and are helping on his work.

"His wisdom ever waketh
 His sight is never dim,
 He knows the way he taketh,
 And I will walk with him."

For the fuller knowledge of our Father our hearts glow with gratitude to Jesus of Nazareth. It is no wonder that he has been, and still is, worshipped by many even as a Divine Person, such rich gifts did he bring to the world. But we do not so preach Christ, nor do we believe that he would have wished it. Beyond all other spiritual leaders he had the vision of eternal realities, and he bound together in his teaching the two mighty thoughts of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of all people, and showed us that our worship is only real when we love and serve all God's children to the utmost of our power. There are many ways of serving. Every one can do something to brighten the lives of others. In this new age, as we come to see clearly that all people have essentially the same needs with ourselves, new ways of carrying out the teachings of Jesus are continually opening. Whatever our own gifts may be, we can make them contribute to the common stock of happiness, and are blessed both in giving and receiving.

"Jesus, I fain would find
 Thy zeal for God in me,
 Thy yearning pity for mankind,
 Thy burning charity."

God wishes us to do our best for each other, and the more that we try the more power he seems to give us to work with him in his blessed ministries, for, as the old apostolic teaching reads, "to all the Father desires to give of his own gracious gifts." So we look

to Jesus, who brought us this beautiful gospel of love and taught us that we are all members one of another, and who lived himself in the light of these high ideals, going about to do good, and giving up his life for mankind, not as we worship the Great Creator, our Celestial Companion, the High and Lofty One, who inhabited Eternity, but as unto our master and teacher, the elder brother who has shown us the way, the fairest of the sons of men, who through all the centuries since he walked on earth has remained, in the words of Martineau, "the most enduring object of human affection."

"May I send my love to Jesus?" asked a little child, unexpectedly, as she knelt at her mother's knee for her evening prayer, and her mother could not say her nay.

We learn of Jesus and of the history of the Hebrews, with their long struggle after a knowledge of God, from the Bible, the collected writings which form the Old and New Testaments. Generations of our forefathers have lived in the light of it, and meditating upon its holiest and clearest lessons they found, in spite of its having been translated, often imperfectly, from older languages, and containing much that still remains doubtful and perplexing, enough of divine truth to be their guide and strong support through the wilderness of life. We believe that the Bible is inspired only as are the sacred books of all nations, but as the Hebrew seers and prophets rose at last to a spiritual height surpassing all other seekers after truth, and their message culminated in the glorious gospel of Jesus, so we hold to our hearts this Book of books, which we have inherited from our fathers. The splendor and force of its language

command our admiration and stamp its teachings upon the mind, while every day they grow clearer to our understanding from the explanations of enlightened criticism. We welcome all the research that shows us how the idea of the one true God slowly rose and expanded, and how the different books were put together, until the Bible came to exist as a whole, as we have it now, with all its mysteries and enigmas the bread of life to the believer's heart, the human soul in its search after the Eternal speaking from the depths of the past to the soul of man to-day.

And what may we think about the life beyond? About the life of the soul, which we know is our real self, when the body grows weary, and is laid away? Whether the account be true or not that Jesus, through the Father's grace and his own extraordinary power of spirit, was able to appear to his disciples after death and prove to them that he was living, we know that we are still in God's universe, and he is with us, for he is everywhere, and he will take care of us, as he does now, wherever we may be. Even if we do not desire a future life for ourselves, our hearts plead that we may see again the parents, the children, the friends we have lost, who have entered before us into the unseen. And, believing as we do that our spirits share the nature of the Eternal, we have good ground for belief in a future life, not as a reward for any good actions here, but as truly a natural process as was our birth into this world, or the coming of the violet and anemone out from the dark earth in the spring.

There is no selfishness in this expectation of a continued life. If we love our lost friends, we wish to see them again, to understand them better and do

better by them than we could possibly do here, and, if we love our God and Father, we wish to go on working for him, and to enter with more intelligence into his vast and beautiful designs. The old catechism describes the chief end of man as "to glorify God and enjoy him forever," and these words express our longing, as we think of the goodness of our Father, the beauty of his works, his nearness to us, and the wonderful possibilities of the natures he has given us. "Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee."

And may we not, in our lowliness, also believe a corresponding truth? The great English preacher, Stopford Brooke, says, "God never considers himself at all," and surely we may think that our Almighty Father finds happiness, like an earthly father, in considering his children, in developing and making them perfect, in combining them for carrying out of mighty undertakings that as yet we know not of, and so enjoying them forever, through all the ages. The human personality is the most precious thing that this world can show us, and doubtless he who made it values it far more than we.

"I came," said Jesus, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," and on the hills of Galilee he taught his disciples, and the crowds that thronged to hear his words, how to enter into the blessedness of this higher life, the real life of humanity, and how to meet the trials and solve the problems of their every-day experience by the light of heavenly wisdom. With patience and fortitude, therefore, with forbearance and compassion, and with eyes opened to the needs of the other children of God around us, so often messengers of things

divine, let us follow him in the path of obedience, confident that there is hope for all, that we can rise above our temptations and repair our mistakes, and that we are needed in God's world.

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The Jesus of the Gospels and the Jesus of History.

By J. Estlin Carpenter, M.A.

THE Jesus of history has many shapes. Age after age has the sublime figure of the Gospels presided over the growth and changes of the Church, and age after age have men interpreted him differently, defined his being, understood his function, and realised his character, in varying forms. Born on the Syrian hills, the great tradition takes up into itself at once a host of expectations, thoughts, beliefs, out of the common heart and hope around. It passes with the Apostle Paul beyond the limits of its native soil; but as it is launched upon humanity, it bears already the impress of a fresh mind, and it proceeds to win the Greek with the ideas and reasonings of the strictest Jew. In his turn does the Greek transform it, drawing it into the charmed circle of philosophy, and throwing around it a wondrous fabric of the spiritual imagination, which might link Jesus with the world, with man, with God, and find in him the harmony of thought between all three. And then it is handed on to Rome. Planted in centre after centre of imperial sway, it becomes the basis of a vast organisation, and knits East and West in common faith and life. But all the while it is being subtly changed. It absorbs into itself new elements of intellectual conception, of hierarchical

government, and ritual usage; and the Jesus of the Gospels becomes the Christ of the Creeds and of the Church.

I.

So, between the historical Jesus of Nazareth and the Jesus of Christian history there are many stages, sometimes obscure and difficult to traverse, and it is not easy to find the precise unity that underlies the whole. There is the Christ of Dogma, that strange ideal construction against which the words of the real Jesus appeal, but so often appeal in vain. There is the Christ of the Apostles' Creed, 'the only Son of God the Father Almighty'; but the Jesus of the Mount spoke with equal ease of 'my Father' and 'your Father,' and laid his blessing on the peacemakers, that they should be called 'Sons of God.' There is the Christ of the Nicene Creed, 'Very God of Very God, being of one substance with the Father': while the Jesus of the crucifixion cried 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' There is the Christ of the so-called Athanasian Creed, who is at once 'Perfect God and Perfect Man': though the Jesus of the way-side had declined even the title 'good' on the express ground that 'none is good save one, that is God.'—Shall I pursue the subject further? There is the Christ of the Fathers, who veiled his deity in manhood to persuade the devil to swallow the bait of his flesh, and then could not be held in the realms of death, but opened hell and led captivity captive. Or there is the Christ of the medieval jurisprudence, who paid the ransom of humanity not to Satan but to God; who was born in fact only to die; whose thirty years counted for nothing compared with the moment of dissolution on the cross:—or the Christ of modern Evangelicalism, in whose words and life our unwary nature found dangerous snares, encouraging infinite delusions of self-righteousness:—or the Christ of recent

speculative philosophy, who is the manifestation of the unknown God, the only guarantee of his personality, the sole key to the mystery of that vast Being who must otherwise remain hopelessly unknown, the solitary bulwark against agnosticism and unbelief.

But the Jesus of history bears another aspect. Although he declared that the Son of Man should come to the judgment before all his bearers passed away, he nevertheless designed and instituted an enduring Church, committing to it the deposit of the truth and the rule of discipline for all succeeding times. Into this Church there is no entrance save by baptism. It is true that the Jesus of the Gospels called the little children to him, took them in his arms, and laid his hands upon them and blessed them. It is true that he declared that of such is the kingdom of heaven, and bade his disciples understand that except they should turn and become like them, they would be shut out. But the Christ of the ecclesiastical order will have none of them upon these terms. He is supposed to affirm that until the water and the word have lighted on them, they are subject to the Father's wrath; and till that is averted by the sacrament of baptism, he will not suffer them to come unto him. Touched with the confessions of human guilt, the Jesus of the parables sent the penitent straight to God in prayer; nay bade him boldly plead the forgiveness he had already granted to his brother sinner, on his own behalf at the throne of grace. But the Christ of the twelfth century still empowers the Anglican bishop to lay his hands upon the deacon's head, and impart to him the right divine, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.'¹ In an upper chamber, at the

¹ These words are not found in any Ordinal earlier than the twelfth century, *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, vol ii. p. 1513, art. 'Ordination.'

passover, the Jesus of Jerusalem sups for the last time with his followers. He sees already that the end is near. The fatal plot is gathering round him; the traitor needs to take but one step more and all is over. 'Take, eat,' he says, and breaks the unleavened bread, 'this is my body.' And lo, this day upon ten thousand altars that same body which was born and grew and rose again, has been made anew, and Christ himself, with human soul—aye, even with human sense—is present in it, and offers himself a bloodless sacrifice. 'One is your master,' said the Teacher to his disciples, 'and all ye are brethren.' But the Christ of this generation has not so taught the mightiest branch of his Church. It is no fraternity of equal rights, where the only distinction is that of higher service; it is a hierarchy of powers: and at its head sits the supreme Pontiff in the See of Rome, claiming to act by Christ's authority, as his vicar, in his name to protect the believer from error, and lead him by supernatural guidance in the path of infallible truth.

Yet once again in a third character does the Jesus of history present himself before us. For there is the Christ not only of dogma and of ecclesiastical order, but of the individual conscience and affection. Entering the ancient world with a defiance to its lusts, its greed of wealth, its adoration of physical force, the Christ in the hearts of men prompts age after age to new endeavours, and leads them forward to new victories of good. Again and again, indeed, they may fall below their own ideal, but in successive generations the mighty impulse breaks out afresh, and almost every century bears inscribed upon it another chapter in the great New Testament of our humanity. Born in a lowly home and fed by a mother's tenderness, this Christ repaid the gift by declaring all mankind one family, embraced within the fatherhood of God: and having thus enlarged the scope of personal duty, and

the range of individual effort, he kindled the passionate self-devotion of the martyr, inspired the enthusiasm of the missionary, brought healing to the sick, tenderness to the leper, and, at last, liberty to the slave. In years when war was almost the only occupation that really interested men, he redeemed it from baseness by providing in the Cross some worthier object than mere selfish gain, and created the ideal of the true knight: and when women had no resources, no careers, he lifted them into the glory of the virgin and the saint. Calling for the worship of the spirit, he pointed heavenward the soaring lines of our Cathedrals. Through him was the simplest of human relations glorified by art into universal holiness in the portrayal of the Mother and her babe, so that common women may still look on them and say, 'Ah, who would not be good with a child like that!'¹ He thrilled Dante with the passion of infinite love, and impelled Milton to justify the ways of God to man. Through his thought did the great interpreter of our nature look with such sunny eyes upon the drama of existence; and that which Shakespeare teaches, Goethe, even if Pagan at heart, can but confirm. As the object of its supreme admiration, each age may almost be said to have created, out of the great tradition, its own Christ. Each age has witnessed some fresh statement of his principles: each age has worked them out along some different lines, each age has acknowledged in aspiration, though it may have been unable to realise in act, that Christ has been its life.

II.

Is the present age an exception? I do not think so. For whence have come so many of the ideas now work-

¹ The cry of one poor mother to another, before one of Murillo's pictures exhibited some years ago in the Bethnal Green Museum.

ing obscurely in our midst, if not from the principles of human brotherhood once laid down by Jesus, but so long overlaid by alien formulæ of theology as to be almost ignored? The great doctrines of democracy are but the application to politics of the religious conception under which he interpreted the being and the relations of men: the watchwords of the Revolution, 'liberty, equality, fraternity,' only sum up the significance of Christianity as a social force, and formulate its essential aims. And a corresponding movement is discernible among the Churches. For whatever place may be assigned to the Christ of ancient theology, that which marks the theology of the present day is above all things *the return to Jesus*. As with all potent impulses of human thought, the modern movement has been fed from various springs. A reaction against excessive dogmatism has generated a protest against attempts to define the undefinable. A purely intellectual apprehension is felt to be of small value compared with the moral sympathy which quickens souls. Correct opinion has no necessary connection with worthy living: and though one should know all mysteries, yet not have love, one would be nothing. So the value of the ethical element in Christ, in history, and in the heart of man, is steadily rising. Opposed to the theory of a fallen and ruined nature incapable of good, the new philosophy discovers in conscience an organ of divine revelation, and boldly claims the sanction and support of the Teacher who appeals to our own judgment as to what is right.¹ And the spirit of science can no more be kept out of the investigation of the great movements of thought, than it can be deterred from tracing the successions of the rocks, or enquiring into the origin and constitution of planets, suns, and stars. So the phenomenon of Christianity which appears, for good or ill, as the

¹ *Luke* xii. 57.

mightiest incident in the world's history, demands an explanation, and this age has seen a wide and varied series of labours in its quest. The text of the Gospels has been studied and restored with patient care: contemporary events have been scrutinised for whatever might throw on the records even a passing light: while the explorer's pick has been busy on the sites of ancient ruins, the student has examined the monuments of phases of thought and usage once full of eager hope and national significance, now dead and gone: and out of this vast collection of materials one after another has striven to retell the wondrous tale.

With what result? Why, with the discovery that there is another Jesus of history, who is not developed in the long course of events out of the gospel-story, but out of whom the gospel-story has been itself developed. The Jesus of the creeds, of ecclesiastical order, of the moral consciousness of Christendom, is the growth of the ages that have followed the record: the historical Jesus belongs to the age out of which the record grew. That age was long enough and active enough to give to the traditions which it undertook to preserve and propagate, a character, a colour, of their own: and the enquirer who seeks to know what Jesus of Nazareth actually said and did, finds that he is face to face with the most difficult, if also the most fascinating, of enterprises, the problem, namely, of getting behind the testimony of the early Church to the reality which that testimony partly reveals but partly hides. Is such an attempt, however, justifiable? and even if it be conceded as lawful, how far is it possible?

Every attempt to re-write the Life of Jesus, it was once wittily remarked, implies that the four Evangelists did not finally succeed in their task.¹ Four biographies have come down to us from out of the haze enveloping

¹ Martineau, on Renan's '*Vie de Jesus*,' *Essays, Reviews, and Addresses*, iii. p. 281.

the primitive Church. Emerging into clear view in the middle of the second century, they bring with them no story of the date or circumstances of their composition, and we are left to determine their age and value by comparing their contents and gathering such external attestation as the scanty remains of the literature of the age supply. A slight examination suffices to dispose of the contention that we have here a record of absolute and unerring accuracy. When it is affirmed that the Bible is infallible from end to end, that it contains the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,¹ we may ask how we are to reconcile conflicting statements of fact. When Mark (iii. 16) reports that Simon received his surname Peter on the appointment of the Twelve, and Matthew (xvi. 18) implies that it was conferred at Cæsarea Philippi on the famous occasion when he declared that Jesus was the Christ, and John (i. 42) relates that it was bestowed at his first interview when his brother Andrew led him to the Teacher's abode near Jordan, are we to suppose that every one of these three dates is equally correct? Or if Mark (xi. 12, 15), and Matthew (xxi. 12) place the cleansing of the temple after the solemn entry into the capital at the beginning of the last fatal week, though on different days, and John (ii. 13, 14) assigns it to the first pass-over, at the opening of his ministry, are we to infer, with the accomplished author of the recently published volume 'Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth,' that the act was *twice* repeated, and that the bold deed which on the second occasion cost Jesus his life, passed on the first unnoticed and left him unharmed? Discrepancies of order and conception such as these abound on every page. They place the narratives containing them within the class of the ordinary materials of the historian. He must sift their testimony, confront

¹ Dr. James Spurgeon, *Daily News*, November 25th, 1892.

assertion with assertion, enquire into the circumstances under which his documents took shape, ask what predisposing causes have brought the records into their present form, and then proceed to extricate as best he can the final truth.

But this is not indeed an easy task. At the very outset of his labour the enquirer is struck by one prominent fact: the Gospels present two very different pictures of the Teacher's ministry. While the first Three, with minor variations, are based on substantially the same conception, and reproduce often in the same words the sayings and the deeds of Jesus according to a common tradition, the Fourth Gospel is marked by striking variations, affecting not only the order of events, the length of the Master's career, and the character of his discourse, but also the larger significance of his function and personality. The Jesus of the Synoptics receives in Baptism the attestation of his Messianic calling, and ere he passes to his work is proved by temptation in the wilderness. But the Fourth Evangelist omits altogether the opening heaven over the Jordan bank, and the conflict in the mountain solitudes broken only by the distant roar of the wild beasts. The Jesus of the common tradition takes up the message of his predecessor John, 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' But the Fourth narrative reports no such summons. He seems never to have heard the contents of that message of good news, for the words, *repent*, *repentance*, do not once appear upon his page. Many other features of the triple story of the First Three vanish in like manner. Not one single demoniac crosses the Master's path, or seeks the look and word of power to heal and save. No outcast publican is won back to rectitude and self-respect. No mothers ask a blessing on their babes. The background of village life with all its simple incidents of

homely duty, joy, and suffering, fades out of sight. The parables that floated over the waters of the lake, the rebukes that flashed out in the synagogue, are still. No bread is broken, no cup of the new covenant passed round, at the last meal: no agony in the garden draws down the help of heaven: Jesus passes to death with the majesty of a king, whose kingdom, however, is not of this world, and on the cross, instead of the anguish of desolation, he departs in peaceful triumph, 'It is finished.'

But the Fourth Gospel differs from the other three no less by what it contains than by what it omits. Not only has the story been wholly re-told; not only have traditions been re-cast, facts rearranged, the order and significance of events remoulded; but the very words of Jesus seem often to have undergone a strange transformation. The pregnant sayings with which the prophet of Nazareth meets an objection, baffles a hypocritical inquisition, or opens up a glimpse into the deep things of God, here pass into lengthy arguments and elaborate allegory. The problems of experience with which he deals so promptly with the ease of a rich and commanding nature, 'Who is my neighbour?' 'How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?' 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' sabbath observance, self-denial, saving the lost, these either lose their prominence or disappear. The Teacher's discourse circles instead round a few great themes. God and the world—not as the scene of his creative power but as the great antagonist of his righteous will—the realms of light and darkness, spiritual life and spiritual death, absorb his thought. Above all discord and opposition rises the mystic union of the Father and the Son: and the Gospel is designed to show how the Son leaves his heavenly glory to dwell among men, in human form, showing forth the Father, till the time comes for him to go away and resume his celestial

state. The key to the whole thus lies in the identification effected by the writer between the Galilean Jesus and the pre-existent Word. But he does not assert this on the authority of Jesus himself. He takes his readers into the secret before his narrative begins, and thus attaches at the outset to the life which he is about to describe, a profound conception borrowed from Greek philosophy, so that the streams of Hebrew vision and Hellenic thought here meet and blend. Behind the term thus imported into the Christian consciousness lies a long descent. With these antecedents, however, we have nothing here to do: we can only ask what is the significance of the Logos for the Jesus of history. And the answer seems clear. It is the interpretation by the disciple, not the word of the Master. The Gospel which portrays him in this character, though it may be founded on historic traditions, though it may have incorporated historical materials, is not itself history. It is a free reproduction of the words and deeds of Jesus in the light of great ideas: it is the attempt to present his life and work through the medium of a representation adopted from a different lineage of thought, and intelligible to a fresh order of minds. What steps may have intervened before the Jesus of the common tradition was transformed into the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel, or how far these stages can be traced within the limits of the New Testament itself, it would need a separate evening to enquire. It must suffice to point out here that not only has the actual speech of Jesus been translated from the Aramean vernacular of his native tongue into the purity of limpid Greek, but (as is recognised by the latest Bampton lecturer upon the subject¹) the *thought* of Jesus has undergone translation too, and the Jesus of history, therefore, must be sought elsewhere.

¹ Archdeacon Watkins, *Modern Criticism considered in its Relation to the Fourth Gospel*, 1890, p. 426.

III.

There is only one place where he can be found. The Three First Gospels are united by a common type of portraiture. Amid diverse variations they are still linked in general harmony with each other and with contemporary Jewish life; and this justifies us in seeking there, if anywhere, the truth about him. Their testimony is indeed not free from difficulty. The tissue of which they are woven is by no means all of one piece. They contain deposits from many different layers of tradition. It would be easy to contrast one Gospel with another, nay, even to contrast any one Gospel with itself, and show the existence within the Church of varying views of the scope and meaning of the Master's words. We are not, therefore, discharged from the critic's task, nor entitled simply to set our narratives side by side, forcing them into unnatural accord. Nevertheless, a brief examination shows that they are all based on the same idea, they treat the ministry of Jesus in the same way, they attach the same general significance to his person and work. That idea, that significance, are summed up in one word, Jesus is the Christ. 'The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,' so runs the title of our earliest record 'according to Mark.' As the conception of the Logos in his relation to God, the world, and man, pervades the Fourth Gospel, so is the common tradition with its different supplements moulded on the belief that Jesus is the Messiah. It is a belief that carries us at once into the heart of Jewish hope. In the ancient times of idolatry and disaster, of misrule within and invasion without, the seers of Israel had looked for the ideal king who should restore the glories of the Davidic reign, and bring to his nation the blessings of justice, security, and peace. First of all, the Assyrian conqueror should be repelled. When the empire of

Nineveh passed to the lords of Babylon, and the expected prince had not appeared, the day was but postponed. Jerusalem itself might fall, but it would be restored; and with its revival the monarchy would be rebuilt as well. The exiles returned, but the golden age did not set in; yet through centuries of trial the afflicted people clung to its great trust. Disappointment could not dull, nor suffering extinguish it, and persecution only raised it in a new form to fresh intensity. When the cruelties of Antiochus Epiphanes drove the Maccabean heroes to a last desperate fight for their liberty and their religion, the writer of the Book of Daniel (about 165 B.C.) beheld the horn and mouth impersonating the Syrian tyranny done away (vii. 20-22), and the kingdom given to the holy people. Antiochus died, though not as the seer predicted; no judgment seat was set; no books were opened. The world went on again upon its course; but expectation had again been quickened, and a stream of apocalyptic literature burst forth. New faith was awakened for the pious dead; they should arise to share the future glory; the present 'age' should give place to 'the age to come,' and resurrection should be the prelude to the fresh life on earth, transformed into a fitting scene for the 'kingdom of heaven.'

Through the midst of these anticipations rang the piercing cry of John, '*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*' A thrill of excitement swept over the land, and multitudes thronged round the prophet on the Jordan bank. Among the hearers was a young man from Nazareth. The call had reached him, and he came. When the Baptist's voice is hushed by imprisonment, he takes up the word, and returns to his native Galilee to repeat it there, '*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*' (Matt. iii. 2, iv. 17, cp. Mark i. 4, 15). That great divine event, then, is already near. His mission is to proclaim it to his countrymen, show its

true character, apply it to their common life, their daily hopes and cares, and the religious institutions of the time. He goes into the synagogue, and his hearers exclaim with wonder, 'What is this, a new Teaching?' (*Mark* i. 27). He seeks the outcast and forlorn, his explanation is ready, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners' (*Mark* ii. 17). His disciples transgress sabbath usage, he is unabashed; by one simple rule all ordinances are judged, 'The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath' (*Mark* ii. 27). They neglect traditional purifications, and at a single stroke ceremonial obligation is superseded by the inwardness of morality, 'There is nothing from without the man, that, going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man' (*Mark* vii. 15). Everywhere as the Teacher moves, delivering his message, a great original soul shines forth through the haze of later legends, or through the limitations and beliefs of the age.

I say 'through the haze of later legends,' for who now will plead for *all* the miraculous incidents of the Gospel story? How many people really believe that Jesus cursed a fig-tree for not bearing fruit out of season, and that it at once shrivelled up before the astonished eyes of the disciples (*Matt.* xxi. 18-20)? How many people really believe that Moses and Elijah stood in living form beside him on the Mount of the Transfiguration: or that at his death the tombs were opened and the bodies of the saints were raised, so that two days after they walked openly into the streets of Jerusalem, and appeared unto many (*Matt.* xxvii. 52-53)? Even within our Gospels the presence of ideal elements is now winning gradual recognition. In his recently published treatise on Apologetics, the learned and genial Dr. A. B. Bruce, from whose writings students of all schools have so much to learn, finds such an ideal picture in the closing scene of the Gospel accord-

ing to *S. Matthew*, where the risen Jesus imparts to the disciples on the mount the great commission, 'Go ye and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit' (*Matt.* xxviii. 19-20). It is expressive of the consciousness of the Catholic Church rather than of what was likely to proceed from the mouth of Jesus before he finally left this world. It is 'not a report of what the risen Jesus said to his disciples at a given time and place,' but rather 'a summary of what the Apostolic Church understood to be the will of the exalted Lord.'¹ This method of treatment may be easily applied elsewhere. If the Gospel ends by idealising Jesus, it may also begin. The narratives of the virgin-birth prefixed to the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke are marked by peculiarities of style which at once separate them from the traditions of the ministry. That they do not belong to the earliest story is generally conceded: that they are independent and irreconcilable is also frankly confessed even by sincere believers in the deity of Christ. The stories which they tell so differently cannot *both* be true: can we receive either of them as evidence of fact? They embody the faith, says Dr. Bruce, in the sinlessness of Jesus: 'the history is not the creation of the faith, but it came late in the day, when believers in a sinless Christ began to wonder how such an one as he entered into human life.'² 'Came,' where from? Our author himself supplies the answer. It is not founded on fact, it is the product of speculation; it is not born of *faith*, but it springs out of *wonder*—a still more unsubstantial foundation! And if it be argued that a physical miracle is needed to support and harmonise the moral miracle of the sinlessness of Jesus, I may reply that this in its turn requires proof. This, no less than the other, is a

¹ *Apologetics*, p. 463.

² *Apologetics*, p. 409.

historical phenomenon, and can only be known by historic evidence. When I find that the Buddha was regarded by his followers as sinless long ere Christ was born, and that he too was wondrously conceived within the womb, I ask for the justification of the belief, and I learn that it was a dogma of the Buddhist order, arising out of their ideal conception of the founder.¹ I am then justified in rejecting it. In the same way,—may we not say—the doctrine of the sinlessness of Jesus belongs rather to the realm of ideal faith. You cannot establish it on the record, for the record is incomplete. You may read through a Gospel in a morning. How much will you know of the mind of Jesus minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, even during his ministry, let alone his thirty years? You may know him in his great moments, his seasons of insight or exaltation: and you may infer much that **must** have lain between. But can you infer *all*? Was there no weariness, depression, impatience, despondency? I do not look for flaws in that brief story, I am content to find there the traces of the words and thoughts of the noblest and holiest of men. I am not here to charge Jesus with ‘moral defect.’ But to affirm that from the manger to the cross no shadow of infirmity fell on him, and then to bid me accept in the teeth of historical difficulties the stupendous wonder of the miraculous conception, because faith in the moral miracle demands a physical base,—this is to invert the legitimate order, and rest my facts on my beliefs, not my beliefs on facts.

I have spoken of seeing Jesus ‘through the haze of later legends,’ which give to him an unreal greatness. There is another veil which hides him from us in his real greatness, ‘the limitations and beliefs of his age.’ How much of these as they are presented to us in the

¹ A similar belief arose concerning Mohammed.

Gospels, did he share? He uses the common language of his countrymen concerning demoniacal possession. Does he do so by way of accommodation to his hearers, or in the simplicity of genuine conviction? There is no trace that he adopts a point of view that is not his own. He recognises that others beside himself can work with healing power upon the possessed: 'If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges' (*Matt.* xii. 27). But can we accept this as a satisfactory interpretation of the facts? Admirable is the courage of Prof. Sanday, who affirms that so far as Jesus shared this belief, he shares it too.¹ Yet it is with a true instinct that Prof. Huxley recently fixed on the Gadarene miracle as the practical key to the whole position. If epileptic disease was due to demoniacal possession in the days of Jesus, to what is it due now? Can we isolate one little group of phenomena in a particular time and place, and say 'these were produced by a special outburst of diabolic craft,' while the same phenomena in other countries or at other times, are explained by natural causes? The roots of Jewish demonology are not obscure; they can be traced back to the magic of ancient Babylonia. The practices of Jewish exorcism as they are described by Josephus and in the Talmud, have their parallel in nearly every country on the globe. Yet this belief has wholly vanished from our modern thought. The evil spirits with Satan at their head have been expelled from a universe which has no room for their causation. I find it impossible to suppose that any theory of a veiled omniscience can account for this lapse into a plain survival of a lower stage of thought. No self surrender of pre-existing knowledge could result in such an error. *The Second Person of the Godhead could not have held this*

¹ *Contemporary Review*, September, 1892, p. 350.

faith if it were not true. I cannot persuade myself that it was true: and I am compelled, therefore, to reject the claim which Jesus never made in his own behalf, and pronounce him to this extent a man, a son of his country, of his age, and race.

Once more, we have seen that the Gospel records agree in presenting Jesus as the Messiah. He does not, indeed, according to the oldest tradition, at first openly assume this character. In what capacity he understood it, time is now lacking to inquire. But I cannot read the story and dislodge it altogether from his thought. In the crisis of his ministry at Cæsarea Philippi, he accepts the title proffered him by the eager Peter, and he afterwards pays for his acceptance with his life. I wish now, however, to lay stress upon the language ascribed to him immediately after he has announced his resolve to go to Jerusalem at all risks, concerning the coming of the Son of Man. 'The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render to every man according to his deeds. Verily I say unto you, there be some of them which stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom' (*Matt.* xvi. 27, 28). The same prediction is made two days before the Passover on the Mount of Olives. The tribulation which shall precede it is described at length; the final signs are named, the darkened sun, the moon eclipsed, stars falling from the sky. The tribes of earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and with great glory. And to this prophecy the solemn attestation is affixed, 'Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away' (*Mark* xiii. 30, 31; *Matt.* xxiv. 34, 35).

No language could more definitely limit the time-

range of the great event. We know how this hope fed the early church. The apostle Paul is a sufficient witness. 'By the word of the Lord' he tells the brethren at Thessalonica not to sorrow without hope for the friends who left them ere the Lord appeared. They too should share in the approaching triumph: 'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord' (*1 Thess.* iv. 15-17). The language of Jesus, then, was understood by his followers to mean that he would return in their own life-time with his great commission to 'judge the world in righteousness' (*Acts* xvii. 31). Tradition told how from their very midst he had been silently lifted off the ground, and borne aloft till a cloud received him out of their sight; when two white-robed visitants in human form assured them that this Jesus which was received up from them into heaven, should so come in like manner as they beheld him going into heaven (*Acts* i. 11). But Jerusalem fell, and still the Lord came not. The prayers that rose with passionate longing for his return remained unanswered; the years passed into generations, the generations into centuries, until at length the Catholic Church accommodated itself to the continuance of the present order; what had been once awaited with such eager hope began now to excite a vague alarm, and the cry that he would *hasten*, came actually to be exchanged for the petition that he would *delay* the great consummation.¹ But what can we say of these words? I will not enter now into the various devices by which their meaning has been evaded. Only three alternatives seem to me possible. Either Jesus,

¹ Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 32, soon after 200 A. D.

as the Church supposed, predicted his own return, but the date assigned for it passed by, and the prophecy was never fulfilled: or, secondly, as many modern critics have thought, the words (in their present form) have been erroneously attributed to him: or, thirdly, they described in figurative language borrowed from the book of Daniel the speedy advent of a great world crisis, in which he himself, however, claimed no share. Observe that Jesus never says 'I shall return'; he nowhere announces 'You shall see *me* coming'; he never declares in his own person, 'I shall judge mankind.' If this last view be tenable,¹ Jesus is relieved of the imputations of fanaticism and arrogance which have been founded on the supposition that he identified himself with this final scene. His error consisted only in a too fervent faith in what he deemed the purposes of God. It is always the illusion of noble souls to think the triumph of righteousness nearer than it is. As Jesus opened his ministry by declaring the kingdom of heaven at hand, so he closed it by telling the High Priest that he and his colleagues on the Sanhedrin should themselves see the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven (*Mark* xiv. 62, *Matt.* xxvi. 64). It was a daring and magnificent assertion: but it was not vindicated by events. The series of conceptions to which it belongs, have then no place in a Christianity which has to adapt itself to a world that abides instead of passing away. The Drama of God's dealing with man is not divided into two great acts—the age that now is, and the age to come—by a vast display, a resurrection, and a judgment day. We do not look for tombs to open, or the sea to give up its dead. No trumpet blast will summon all the nations to the world's assize. All this is but the temporary element in the thought of Jesus. Belonging to the current beliefs of

¹ Carpenter's *First Three Gospels*, chap. vii. §§ 4, 5.

his time, it has no part in his enduring teaching. It brings no message to our modern time, until it is translated into forms from which all that is local and specific has been cast out. Not through these Jewish notions does he make God known, not through such prophecies does he 'show us the Father.' The permanent, the imperishable element, is a truth in life that lies behind.

IV.

And how can a truth in life be stated? It can indeed, only be *felt in living*. Reduced into propositions, packed into formulæ it loses its beauty and ceases to be desired. The Gospel-words which have for us the deepest meaning, are very possibly not those which seemed to Jesus himself of first importance. His object was to prepare his people for the change he deemed so near. But the sayings which give to us the most significant glimpses into his inner mind, which reveal to us the depth of his sense of the presence of God, or send the most penetrating light through our own conscience, are dropped as it were by the wayside, or struck out like sparks from some hidden fire in colloquy with critics or opponents. He is prophet, poet, seer, all in one; but his meaning is often to be felt rather than stated, comprehended by sympathy rather than expounded in words. The preacher tells you that he taught the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, and you feel that you have heard that before. The phrase is dulled by its monotony; you are not interested. But you read the Gospels, and the words become quick with power. You see a man engaged in the greatest of all tasks, the attempt to translate ideas into life. Here is what makes history and uplifts the race, for that which moves the world is thought and character embodied in a high endeavour. So 'through the haze of later legend and the limitations and beliefs

of the age,' you feel the force of a mighty personality, you are brought within the range of a vivid moral influence, you are in contact with a new source of spiritual energy.

It is sometimes asked what there is in Christianity which there was not in the Judaism out of which it issued. Had not Israel already worked out those truths on which Jesus fixed as the most characteristic expression of religion and duty? It is true that within the limits of Israel, in the Psalmists of the Second Temple, the note of the Gospel is sounded again and again in advance; and, in one sense, what Jesus did was to throw open to mankind the faith which had become the inheritance of his nation, to state as a universal truth what had hitherto been realised only in one historic line. But it was just that for which the insight of a new soul was needed. To those, therefore, who tell us that there is nothing more in Christianity than there was in Judasim, we may reply that there is Jesus himself. He does not step forward before his countrymen as the founder of a new religion. He is not consciously the bringer of fresh revelation. He does not stand, as Paul stood, at a crisis in human history, when one divinely ordained power is being replaced by another, and the Law with its national restrictions is abolished in favour of the Spirit of life which will make Greek and Jew all one in Christ. Jesus establishes no organisation; he creates no Church.¹ He does not foresee that the stately march of the generations of men will go on without break for eighteen centuries, occupying lands whose very existence was unknown: still less does he foresee that for eighteen centuries men will look back to him as the leader of their life. But nevertheless he has become so. In virtue of the

¹ I agree with Wendt, *The Teaching of Jesus*, ii. 351, that the only two passages where the word Church occurs, *Matt.* xvi. 18, xviii. 17, are of later date in their present form.

intensity of his own religion he proves the quickener, the inspirer, of ours. That which he saw, he teaches us to see. We get from him the insight, though we know not how it comes, as our spirits rise into closer fellowship with his. It is because the springs of our faith are fed from the same sources. For the permanent element in the teaching of Jesus did not concern himself. That would have had of necessity a local and a temporary form, whose interest would have faded when he passed from sight. But it concerned the two beings who will remain face to face with each other as long as the world lasts, man and God. It presented them in a relation which was not stated by him for the first time, but which won a fresh force and scope through his personal experience of it. Here was a new significance given to the love of God; here was set forth with new hope and power the destiny of men. In returning to the historical Jesus we do not return to a supreme and absolute authority. We cannot escape the responsibility which he lays on us, to judge ourselves what is right. But we recognise that that consciousness of God's nearness which is with us often so dim, so inarticulate, so intermittent, was with him constant and clear; and we trust his higher vision because we can verify it, however imperfectly, in our own religious experience. It is true that our intellectual apprehension of God, in his relation to the world at large, includes manifold elements which were not present to his thought. We do not suppose that he knew the distance to the sun, or could analyse the light of the fixed stars. The universe which we behold is the same to sense, but how changed is our interpretation of it. Yet there is one element in it concerning which he has still more to tell us than we could have to teach him—the nature of the Power that lies at its heart, man's kinship with it, his duties towards it, his hopes and expectations from it.

These have not altered because Priestley discovered oxygen, or Murchison told the story of the rocks, or Darwin sought for the origin of species. We may have superior science, but Jesus has the imperishable in religion: for he has shown us how Law and Love are both of them aspects of the same great unity: the daily sunrise and the sparrow's fall are alike embraced within one Order, of which man is part. So we will strive after his fundamental aim, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness;' with trembling we accept his awful law, 'Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect'; and we know that in these endeavours lies the fullest promise for the true progress of mankind. In working out the ideas of the Gospel is the surest hope for deliverance from worldliness, for the overcoming of evil, for the elevation of life. The conditions of the present time may be far more complex, but the moral problem—the problem of character—is still the same, and the solution cannot be different. The Jesus of history still holds the key for the welfare and the happiness of his race.

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A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF UNITARIANISM

BY

REV. BROOKE HERFORD, D.D.

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

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APR 18 1917

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF UNITARIANISM

UNITARIANISM is often spoken of, but not many people seem to know what it really is. Many have an idea that it is a dreadful kind of infidelity, to be shunned as wicked and dangerous. Yet they know that in public life Unitarians are among the most respected and reliable men; and certainly some of those who have stood before the world as Unitarians—such ministers as Dr. Channing, John Hamilton Thom, and Dr. Martineau, such writers as Oliver Wendell Holmes and H. W. Longfellow, such scientists as Sir Charles Lyell and Dr. W. B. Carpenter—have been men of a deeply thoughtful and religious spirit. So the question is widely asked:

WHAT IS UNITARIANISM?

The briefest answer is, that it is that form of Christianity which holds to the faith in the simple Unity of God,—that God is One, not a Trinity; and which looks upon Jesus Christ as the greatest and holiest of Teachers, but not God. Around this great central position have commonly grouped themselves some other beliefs of hardly less importance. Thus Unitarians regard *Man* as the child of God—not “fallen” and totally depraved, but only slowly rising; *Salvation*, as deliverance from sin, including everything that heals and helps man towards goodness and God; *Heaven and Hell*—not separate worlds, but what men

make of their own lives, both in this world and the world to come, while in no world can man ever go beyond the love and goodness of God. Unitarians, also, while reverencing the *Bible* as a text-book of religion, have always regarded it as the records of God's gradual revelation of his truth and will,—but human records to be studied with perfect freedom.

This is the common position of Unitarians. This is their general way of looking at the subject of religion. But while there is quite as much agreement among them as among the members of any other group of churches, *Unitarians have no formal Creed.*

They do not shape these beliefs into any set of authoritative forms which must be accepted either by churches or individuals, but urge upon all to think for themselves, and leave their churches open to the reception of new truth.

A question often asked is: When did Unitarianism arise?

In reality, it would be more historically correct to speak of *the rise* of "Trinitarianism." Because that was the thing which rose, while Unitarianism was what was there before. Unitarianism is as old as the Hebrew Lawgiver who said, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One." Christian Unitarianism is as old as Jesus, who simply reaffirmed that grand truth, only with a tenderer light upon the thought of that One Infinite Being. Christ's own teaching was simply that of *One God, our Heavenly Father.* And the Christianity which the Apostles preached was still the same: One Almighty God; and Jesus Christ, not a God to be worshipped, but a divine teacher to be loved and followed. But then grad-

ually came the change. The gospel went forth among heathen peoples. These were quite used to the idea of gods descending to earth in the form of men. So it came quite naturally to them to think that this great Christ must have been such a God, though at first they regarded him as only a created and subordinate god. Once exalted into a god, the tendency was to exalt him towards equality with the Supreme Deity. Then, by a similar tendency, the "Holy Spirit"—really the Divine influence—came also to be thought of as a distinct Divine person. And so the spirit of abtruse speculation took men further and further from the simplicity of Christ until at last—three hundred years after Christ—a Trinitarian Creed was arrived at, and finally proclaimed as the authoritative religion of the Christian Church. This was the rise of Trinitarianism.

And yet it must not be thought that the older, *original* Christianity gave in without long and repeated struggle. From the first there were those who resisted these tendencies to make Christ into a God, and especially the later attempt to make him equal to the Supreme Being. Best known of these are the *Arians*, who in the fourth century constituted nearly half Christendom, and who for centuries after, though declared heretics, still kept up their protest against this doctrine which had changed Jesus of Nazareth into Almighty God. But the tide was too strong. More and more the centre of the Church came to be Rome, and gradually *Arianism* was crushed out everywhere, and *Trinitarianism* seemed finally to have usurped the place of the simple Christianity of Christ.

UNITARIANISM AT THE REFORMATION

It was many centuries before that simple, original Christianity began to rise again. But at last came the great Reformation. That set the mind of Europe free; and among the very earliest movements of that great epoch were some which gave birth to our modern Unitarianism. At first the Reformation was chiefly moral. First went indulgences and prayers to the saints. Then the miraculous sacrifice of the Mass was changed back towards the simple commemoration of the Lord's Supper. Then came the question of God and Christ; and some began to notice how different was the language of the Creeds about the Trinity from Christ's own simple way of speaking of the Heavenly Father. Once that question opened, there was no closing it again. From that day the old truth of the simple Unity of God has been struggling upwards; and, in spite of all persecution, has been winning an ever-widening way. There was nothing like organized Unitarianism at first. It was just the private heresy of a few daring thinkers. They had no party. One of the first indications we have of some thinking that way is through finding an aged woman, Katherine Weygel, burned alive at Cracow in 1539, at the age of eighty, for Unitarian opinions. She was a reading woman, and could not find any Trinity in the Bible, and she said so freely. Others died the martyr's death here and there for the same cause. Then a little later we find Unitarianism beginning to be more distinctly developed and promulgated by some of the wandering students and teachers of the time. Such an one was the well-known Ser-

vetus who, having studied the Bible, came to the conclusion that primitive Christianity had no Trinity in it, wrote his great work, "The Restoration of Christianity," to prove this to the world; and after incensing Calvin and the other Reformation leaders by his pertinacious arguments, was at length—in 1553—burned in effigy by the Catholics at Vienne, and in stern reality by John Calvin at Geneva.

UNITARIANISM IN POLAND

The first organized church in Europe, rejecting the Trinity, was in Poland. In the middle of the sixteenth century, Poland was one of the foremost countries of Europe, and one in which there was entire religious liberty. So here many wandering, persecuted Unitarians found a refuge, and drew many of all classes to their belief. Unitarian churches sprang up all over the country. At Racow they had a great college, with sometimes a thousand students. Even Catholics sent their sons there, because the education was so good, and already these Unitarians had won the reputation of not interfering with their students by religious proselytizing. Meanwhile, close by Poland, there was growing up a strong sister church.

TRANSYLVANIA AND HUNGARY

It was in 1564 that a movement against the doctrine of the Trinity arose in Transylvania, and so rapidly did it spread that within one generation Unitarianism had about four hundred churches in Transylvania, with thirty-seven in Hungary, and a great

college at Klausenburg; and there in the heart of Europe it looked for a time as if the fuller Reformation was beginning which should take the world back to the Christianity of Christ.

But it was only for a little while. The vast strength of Europe was either intolerantly Catholic, or almost as intolerantly Calvinist or Lutheran. This Unitarianism in Poland and Hungary really depended upon two enlightened Protestant kings. These died in 1571 and 1572, and in each country the next ruler was a Catholic, and at once the Unitarian churches began to suffer. They were so strong that they struggled on, and for a time found powerful protection, but gradually they lost ground. In 1638, in Poland, their college was destroyed, its teachers banished, the Unitarian churches closed. At last, in 1658, all Unitarians were banished. They were given three years to leave the country. They petitioned for longer time, and the three years were changed into two! Thus finally, in 1660, the Unitarians were all driven from Poland; it was made death to profess their doctrines or to shelter their persons; and Unitarianism in Poland, after existing for just a century, was utterly crushed out.

The wonder is that it did not perish as completely in Transylvania. There, too, the Catholic rulers, the Hapsburgs, tried every kind of repression. But the hardy Szekler peasantry held to their faith. Their numbers diminished indeed. The thirty-seven congregations in Hungary entirely disappeared. The four hundred churches in Transylvania dwindled to one hundred. Yet still they held together generation after generation. The last effort to crush them oc-

curred as late as 1857, when Austria had just made a new concordat with Rome. But with the help of their fellow-believers in England, they survived that attack also; and now in the freer atmosphere of a regenerate Austro-Hungary they are growing stronger.

UNITARIANISM IN ENGLAND

Here, also, the story of Unitarianism is one which begins from the earliest times of the Reformation, though it was for a long time only the story of struggling and isolated heretics. The sixteenth century is dotted over with names of Unitarian martyrs. The last persons put to death for religion in England were two who were burned for Unitarianism in 1612. But flames could not put into the New Testament anything but the old simple doctrine of One Almighty God, and Christ a great holy teacher, but not God. The Latin treatises and catechisms of the Polish Unitarians were smuggled into England and widely read. All through the Puritan struggle of the seventeenth century there was a strong undercurrent of Unitarian thought. It was held by some of the greatest minds of the age—such as John Milton, John Locke, and Sir Isaac Newton. It was not organized into a church. It could not be. But it kept spreading, and when at last some congregations openly took the name, it was not as anything new.

The first of the body of churches now commonly known as Unitarian was established in 1774 by Theophilus Lindsey, Vicar of Catterick, in Yorkshire, who, having become convinced that Unitarianism is the

doctrine of the Bible, gave up his living, and coming to London, opened Essex Street Chapel.¹ But the great leader of the movement towards the open avowal of Unitarian belief was Dr. Joseph Priestley, and it took place among the English Presbyterians. These English Presbyterians—an entirely distinct body from the Calvinistic Presbyterians of Scotland—though they were originally very much the same in doctrine as the other Nonconformists, differed from them in being unwilling to set up, or submit to, any formal statements of doctrines. When the “Act of Toleration” (1689) enabled them to build chapels, they left their Trust-deeds “open,” not tying them down to the doctrines of their founders. They did this with their eyes open. They were mostly orthodox themselves, but there was free inquiry in the air, and they would not tie down their descendants, but left them free to worship as they might find truest. The consequence was that those descendants became gradually broader in their thought. There was no sudden change of position, but the old points of orthodoxy were less and less insisted on, and they fell back more and more on the simple teachings of the Gospels. It was Theophilus Lindsey and Joseph Priestley who aroused them to the perception that this simpler Christianity to which they had come was, in fact, *Unitarianism*, and who showed them its real importance, and led them to avow it and spread it. They did not indeed take the name. They disliked sect names altogether. They continued, for the most

¹Since removed to Essex Church, Kensington, Lindsey’s chapel being converted into Essex Hall, the headquarters of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

part, to call themselves "Presbyterians," and some do so still. But as a matter of fact, they have come to be commonly known as "Unitarians," and there has been no shrinking from the avowal of the great truths which that name denotes. Only, they are careful to maintain the freedom which has led them to those truths, as well as to bear witness for the truths themselves. So, while the name "Unitarian" is commonly adopted as describing their general position, they have shrunk from permanently labelling their churches by that name, feeling it their duty to preserve them and hand them on in the same freedom in which they received them. This shrinking from a sectarian position, this feeling that they are really not setting up any new doctrine of their own, but simply reverting to the Christianity of Jesus Christ, has in some ways hindered them from propagandist action, and indeed it was not till 1813 that the penal laws against Unitarianism were finally repealed, so that their progress has been slow. But it has gone steadily on. A movement very similar to that among the English Presbyterians took place also among the General Baptists; and a still more important liberal movement among the Irish Presbyterians in the first quarter of the eighteenth century led to the secession of a considerable number of congregations which formed themselves into Non-subscribing Presbyteries. All these are usually classed with Unitarians, being included in a common Year Book, and generally acting together in conferences and associations. The total number of these churches is about three hundred and sixty.

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

The story of Unitarianism in the United States is very much the same as in England. The Massachusetts colonists were Congregationalists, and Congregationalism, in its most rigidly orthodox and Calvinistic form, became the "established church" of that State. But the whole atmosphere of colonial life was that of freedom, and it could not be kept out of religious thought. As early as 1785 one of the Boston churches became openly Unitarian, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century one congregation after another began to declare for freer thought. It was Dr. Channing who became known as the leader of this new Reformation, and whose preaching of it was so fervent that about half the churches in Massachusetts accepted Unitarianism, and it numbered among its adherents many statesmen, writers, and thinkers, eminent throughout the world. Thomas Jefferson, John Quincy Adams, Charles Sumner, Horace Greeley, Horace Mann, Governor Andrew; the poets Longfellow, Bryant, Lowell; Ralph Waldo Emerson, Louisa M. Alcott, Bayard Taylor;—these are but a few of those who might be named.

Moreover, in addition to those American churches which are distinctly enrolled in the Unitarian fellowship, there is the whole Universalist body, with about a thousand churches, which also holds Unitarian doctrine, though laying its special emphasis on the doctrine of universal salvation. The distinctly Unitarian churches number about five hundred.

THE LIBERAL MOVEMENT

While thus setting forth the story of this great movement of religious thought towards the simple Christianity of the Gospels, as it has worked out in connection with the distinctly Unitarian churches, we would utterly disclaim the idea that it has been confined to these. There are great liberal movements in France, Germany, Holland, and Switzerland, which, while not taking any specifically theological name, are in general agreement and hold friendly fellowship with Unitarians. In England, also, there are broad thinkers in the ministry of almost every orthodox denomination, who, if not formally giving up the old doctrines of the Trinity and the other corruptions to which it led, are yet preaching essentially the same simple spiritual thoughts of God and Christ, and of Man and the Eternal Hope, for which Unitarians specially stand, but for which we have so long had to stand alone. Among the members of such churches we believe that these simpler views prevail even far more widely. It is often said that there are many more Unitarians in other churches than there are in our own. We are thankful if it be so. We rejoice in every movement of thought towards the truth, under whatever name. But still it must be remembered that in the churches from which these individual liberal voices come, and in which these thousands of more liberal thinkers worship, the old creeds are still read, the old doctrines are still maintained. Plain people are puzzled when they hear one doctrine in the sermon, and quite another solemnly professed in the creed, or uttered in the prayers. We believe that

the time is ripe for a more clear and open proclamation of the truth, and that there are many who, if they would but look carefully into the matter, would find the religion of Christ a nobler, simpler, and more reasonable thing than it is often represented; and would welcome a church which, while openly standing for the best truth that has yet appeared, stands also for that full liberty of thought which is the best condition for receiving whatever of new truth God may yet have to unfold.

AFFIRMATIONS OF UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY ¹

Unitarian Christianity is a series of great and pregnant Affirmations.

It affirms the Fatherhood of God, to the exclusion of all dogmas which limit his goodness, or clothe the loving Father in the robes of the ruthless judge.

It affirms the love of God to all his children, to the exclusion of all dogmas which shadow that love with a cruel vengeance, or hold men of unsound creed aliens and outcasts from its tenderness.

It affirms the accessibility of the Father to the children's prayer, to the exclusion of all dogmas which teach that God will only heed our prayer if wrapt in sacraments, or if addressed to him through Jesus Christ.

It affirms the pure humanity of Jesus, to the exclusion of all dogmas which shut him out from perfect brotherhood with us, or endow him with a nature which removes him from the category of our sorrows and temptations.

It affirms the speaking of God to man to be as real to-day and to-morrow as in any century of the past, to the exclusion of all dogmas which would confine that living speech within the covers of any Bible, however lofty or sublime.

It affirms the sacred authority of the human reason and the human conscience, to the exclusion of all dogmas which would submit the one to the dictation of a creed, or the other to the orders of a priest.

It is the Gospel of the everlasting Progress, the perfect Freedom, and the universal Love.

¹ These "Affirmations" were written by the Rev. R. A. Armstrong a few years before his death.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

A list of free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional and practical works, will be sent to all who apply.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals.

There are two forms of membership in this Association provided for those who desire to cooperate in the spread of liberal religious thought and influence:

I. *Life Membership*. Any individual may, by the payment of \$50, become a *Life Member* of the American Unitarian Association. Such a person is entitled to vote at all business meetings, to receive the Year Book and Annual Report, and, by means of frequent communications, is kept in touch with the various enterprises promoted by the Association.

II. *Associate Membership*. Other individuals desiring to affiliate with the Association may become *Associate Members* by signing an application card (sent upon request) and the payment of \$1.00. As such they will receive a certificate of *Associate Membership*, also *Unitarian Word and Work* (the monthly magazine reporting denominational news), each new pamphlet as it is issued, and occasional other communications from Headquarters.

Address communications and contributions to the

American Unitarian Association
25 BEACON STREET BOSTON, MASS.

TWENTIETH-CENTURY REVELATION

BY

REV. EDWARD D. TOWLE

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

TWENTIETH-CENTURY REVELATION.

The Unitarian Church has of late been summoned into the lower court of Hebrew and Greek texts and has not cared to enter a defence. For justification of its claim to the name "Christian" and for indorsement of the correctness of its interpretation of the simple religion of Jesus it appeals to the Higher Court of Twentieth-Century Secular Activities, holding that in emphasizing the present and in opposing the domineering of the past it is in accord with the Holy Spirit which inspired Jesus and which is at the heart of all progress. If its interpretation of to-day be right then its reading of yesterday cannot be wrong; and if it can present a religious language that is adequate to the full and strong and true and rich expression of modern life that language must be identical with the language the Master really employed.

The distinguishing mark of Unitarianism is its belief in revelation,—revelation universal, progressive. It holds that every moment is a special moment, every event a special event, if we have eyes to see and ears to hear; for is not God trying each moment and through each event to crowd his being upon us for recognition with all the eager desire of a mother who bends over her babe with infinite tenderness and lavishes her care and affection persistently until at length the first gleam of knowledge steals into the

infant's eye that some other soul has been calling and beckoning it?

And God has ever been calling humanity. Past and present cannot be separated. Rightly understood the past is part of the present. But for a living faith there can be but one starting-point, the present. Generation after generation has been taught that God was surely in the past, and has timidly inferred that perhaps he might be in the present. Rather, God is certainly in the present, and the inference is that he must have been in the past. It is the part of wisdom to realize that it is impossible fully to understand the past, that not one epoch in history can be made really to live again.

Unitarianism, therefore, begins with the present. It has never feared losing God out of his creation. Regarding revelation as the best thing in the world it naturally reasons that it does not become feebler, but ever richer, fuller and clearer. It maintains that earth is destined to be swathed in light; that the precious pin point of holy ground in Palestine, once divinely illumined, is but a sample of what God has in store for his children.

And of course the Eternal, who reveals himself more to-day than ever, reveals himself through the language of to-day. Is not the secular life which characterizes twentieth-century civilization, as manifest in business, science, democracy, literature and art, really the new alphabet, the holy language, the Eternal is employing. Hebrew was termed the sacred tongue, being regarded as the identical language spoken by Jehovah to Adam. Our sacred tongue is different. Religion must be loyal to the present or it will not be loyal to the past. If it quickly catches

the accents of the Holy Spirit to-day will it not be the better qualified to detect these accents in the past? Can a religion that reaches the same conclusions as those reached by the great movements of modern life possibly be in error? By these Unitarianism is ready to test itself, and by their verdict will gladly stand or fall.

But there can be no conflict between two revelations. Whatever is found to be true in one period must be true everywhere and always. The Eternal never contradicts himself. If the Secular Activities are God's present way of communicating then what is thus disclosed will be identical with that unfolded in the past. There will be more of it, but it will in no way oppose that which has preceded it. Rather the new truth will establish the old since it is all from the same source. Do the great creeds of Christendom, the Apostolic Creed, the Nicene, the Athanasian, receive confirmation from Twentieth-Century Revelation? The Council of Trent is claimed to have formulated the inspirations of the Holy Ghost in chapters and sections. Does the Œcumenical Council of the Secular Activities reiterate and re-establish all that the Council of Trent pronounced? God cannot be imagined as imparting one fact in one age and a different in a later. The living texts in which the Holy Ghost expresses itself now must be identical with the genuine texts of religion of earlier epochs. The messages will not disagree. We are sure that God is speaking to-day. We know that the creed the ages are spelling out is God's creed. Under its illumination do the earlier statements shine with increased lustre? If true they would so shine. Old truth always glows with unsuspected radiance when seen in the light of new. The

child, become a man, rejoices that his experiences are adding increasing significance to childhood's words, home, mother. These do not fade. But the creeds of Christendom fade in great degree under the electric light of the modern world.

And, further, not only does new truth cause the old to live as it never lived before but, because all truth is mutually helpful, the old returns the compliment by adding germinating warmth to the unfolding of the new. So far as inherited beliefs are genuine they will not only look more beautiful but will become efficient agents in bringing the new to birth. All truth must be present everywhere, in all spots of earth, must be always present and always active. Argument will not be required to manifest its presence or any chemical analysis to detect it.

Let us apply what has been said to the distinguishing features of traditional theology that are regarded as dividing Unitarianism from the rest of Christendom, or as setting it aside with paganism. Do the specific dogmas of the Fall of Man, Election, the Atonement, the Trinity, Perdition, Exclusive Revelation, appear more winning, more attractive, more plausible with time? Are they evident in the secular life by any added power? If they are not evident in this manner they are not vital expressions of religion. Were they vital expressions they would be evident. You would not look to any theological school to attest their presence by forced argument. No government could frame its constitution without them. Every factory, every locomotive, every steamship, every dynamo, would set its seal upon their genuineness. Were they vital to man's salvation they would ring from the stroke of every pick and sound from the blow of

every hammer. You cannot convince men that a working world is not a world that is constructing by its labor a highway into the presence of the Eternal far more indestructible than philosophers ever by thought alone could build. Every word that can die out ought to die out. And from the collieries of England to the industries of the Pacific slope there is not so much as a flutter of life added to the driving wheels of their engines from any one of the terms I have mentioned.

But not all words die out. Some live and grow ever more resplendent and more mighty, such as God, love, duty, immortality. Twentieth-Century Revelation must confirm all genuine revelation of earlier times. What portion of that which has come down from former generations does the New Revelation of Twentieth-Century Secular Activities find essential to its own fuller discovery of truth and its firmer grasp upon it? What words can man not get along without? Had not Bessemer steel been invented, Pittsburgh and New York, as they exist, would be unknown. Humanity, in order to advance, must find Bessemer steel lying in its path. Are the theological terms mentioned such that the Revelation through Twentieth-Century Industry, Government, Science, Literature and Art could not help inventing them were they not already in existence, in order to declare its secrets? If hitherto not coined would they now be struck off in the mint of men's thoughts?

A person's real faith is what he thinks by in the crises of his life, what he must live by. And the faith this age is spelling out is that which it finds it must think by in order to advance, that it must live by in order to breathe. If the words atonement, perdi-

tion, exclusive revelation, are inevitable words in the evolution of the race then, because the mighty secular activities are the direct heart-throbs of the Eternal, they will be spelled out by the monster machinery of every city, by the growing commerce of land and sea. Literature and art cannot come to perfection without them.

Many religious words have no staying power: they were the offspring of some lonely priestly brain or of some narrow mystic's dreams and, when challenged by the stress and strain of these more strenuous times, disappear like drops of dew, utterly failing to quench the world's thirst. Whatever is indispensable to man's salvation the world's increasing wants will only make more plainly so. The inevitable words of the creed will stand out like mountain ranges. Or, better, each word of the eternal creed over which the ever-enlarging life of humanity will be forced to move must be a genuine steel rail, a hundred pounds to the yard. Otherwise all traffic, spiritual as well as material, will come to a standstill.

The world cannot progress without religion. What, then, are the steel rails of religion, the inevitable words, the world must use or retrograde? You go into almost any factory and find there some marvellous testing-machine. The iron is tested, the cloth is tested, to show how much it can bear to the inch. The Secular Activities are the vast testing-machines to which Unitarianism comes and says, Test this expression: I do not care for it if a few hundred pounds can tear it into shreds. Instead of such in its creed as can be torn apart Unitarianism wishes words that will test the very testing machines themselves.

Now what are the great words humanity must find

in its path in order to progress? Each of the four gospels of this growing revelation, Business, Science, Democracy, Literature and Art, like Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, is a book by itself. But they do not need harmonizing. Although composed from four different standpoints there is not a suggestion of disagreement. They supplement each other. These are certainly the Newest Testament. And all presuppose absolute Freedom in their composing. Over against the infallibility of the dead letter one and all set the inerrancy of living mind in distinguishing truth from error.

Briefly summarized, the inevitable words of each gospel are these. The business man finds himself in a Good World to which the Middle Ages' confessions, written for a lost and ruined world, do not apply. He discovers a world to be trusted, enjoyed, loved, a growing, not a dying world, meriting all his interest. Business inculcates the Dignity of Human Nature. When the Alps are pierced and conquered by human might and skill the majesty of the mountains seems somehow to pass into the very brain and fibre of humanity. The moral element comes evermore to the front. The modern world cannot be a living lie. No falsehood can creep into its boilers and furnaces. Count the constantly increasing number of times the type of the daily papers spell in each issue Duty, Ought, Right, and you will indeed be surprised to see how thoroughly ethical modern life is being forced to become. And in its own way Business inculcates faith in a living God. It brings men into close contact with the Infinite Energy. They realize that One Power is active in all lands, driving the wheels of every factory as well as kindling every star and drawing every tide. So immediately into the presence of this

living Power is humanity brought that no suggestion of any intermediate atonement to aid its nearer approach is ever felt or hinted. And faith in Future Revelation increases. Possibilities loom before every participant in the world's work that do away with all doubt of steadily increasing light.

And the second gospel, Science, proclaims the Trustworthiness of Human Faculties; and, while finding no place for miracle, on this very account exacts more reverence for the sacredness of God's ways and more faith in a Being who never for an instant withdraws himself. Law, the essence of this gospel, is the miracle of miracles, ever declaring that no break is needed, such is the fulness of God's presence. And mind in man, it affirms, is the direct inspiration of the Almighty. Dare to trust it to the uttermost, for in it is God himself enshrined.

The third gospel, Democracy, presupposes the essential soundness of human nature. It places absolute reliance upon Reason. Its standing army is an army of ideas. It also places absolute reliance upon the heart. It discovers the presence of one great spirit dwelling in all alike. A republic must rise and fall together. It cannot recognize permanent classes, even of good and bad. Hence it must become increasingly spiritual. It must rely ever more and more upon Equality, Reason, Love. Justice must become a living thing, Brotherhood a reality. Its standing army must be not simply one of ideas, but of spiritual forces. Republics are children of the present. They cannot endure more than a day unless their inspirations are received from the ever-living God new every morning and fresh every evening. Humanity's life will be intensest in a republic, and to it we must look

to find the deepest spiritual secrets by which civilization must live or die.

The fourth gospel, Literature and Art, is of supreme interest. The study of history—to begin with this branch of literature—has become of such importance that it calls for and receives the lifelong devotion of ablest thinkers, who must surely be competent to discover its essential laws. Does history show any tendency toward confirming the conclusions of the generally accepted theology? Study the facts of ancient and modern times; to what do they point? If the second person in a Trinity died on a cross twenty centuries ago, his death entailing infinite consequences upon our race, then this is the pivotal fact in the world's unfolding, if not in that of the universe. The rays of all history will focus here. It is the only fact worth talking about. The history of the world will never be written aright until the events in every people's life, before and since, are studied in the light of this event. But is there an increasing tendency manifest in the books of the masters of this branch of literature to study events thus? Like iron filings flying to a magnet we should have a right to expect that all events must centre about Calvary. That no such tendency exists to make Judea the heart of all historic writing it is hardly necessary to add.

Next to history comes the novel. The sublimest theology must of necessity be the soil out of which shall spring the grandest novel. Does the novel, which is nothing short of a deep, true study of humanity, find in the tenets peculiar to traditional theology inexhaustible sources of inspiration? To ask the question is to answer it. Where the novelist's strength lies is in the study of Character. He finds no great

gulf fixed between men. He does find unalterable laws governing their development, laws which can elevate to the stars or crush to powder. No trace of election is apparent. The harvest is sure. No cataclysm counts. The ending of one world and the beginning of another cannot change the essential nature of things. Whatsoever a man sows that shall he reap. Character is all. And it is in the light of this thought that Palestine lives again. If all the laws of history do not focus on Calvary, all the laws of human growth are seen to focus in Jesus of Nazareth, and the character of the Master becomes the crowning revelation of God's nature through all the ages.

And the lesson of poetry is that revelation is not an outward matter authenticated by signs and wonders, but an inward matter. Look within if you would see God. In poetry the soul imposes its own law upon the outside world. With sublime confidence the poets of all time have spoken their word and have felt that no outward miracle was necessary to underscore it. In its very simplicity, proportion, and harmony they have felt consisted true revelation. All history might be wiped out and yet poetry would calmly voice its message of present Inspiration with no question that in essentials it contained the core of all holy and uplifting truth of the past. The soul is the fountain-head of authority. And, equally with poetry, music soars into the skies as confidently as the bird. Like poetry it is a law unto itself. Its own structure is its bible. Painting and sculpture, too, claim the right to live each its own life independent of the past. To them life is actually worth living for its own sake. Creation is the child of beauty. Beauty is the offspring of love.

The one faith common to Literature and Art is faith in the Ideal. History, music, poetry, painting, sculpture, all follow ideals born not of dogma, but of the soul. The question naturally arises, does the spiritual nature of man, the highest part of his being, require a different kind of revelation? Need the heavens open for its guidance in any other way than for them? Do not these ideals suggest that the spiritual nature requires no forcing process, that, it too, can be trusted? Nothing artificial is necessary for its unfolding, no grand drama, no mighty, moving, soul-stirring tragedy that shall supplement nature's weak forces. Here, likewise, the revelation is from within,—love of right, willingness to know his will. Else how does it happen that the other ideals find the seasons of earth long enough, the air warm enough, and the climate friendly enough for their development? No, the spiritual ideal is indigenious, a native of the soil, not an exotic. There is but one Ideal, manifesting itself now in painting, now in poetry, music, now in character. And the witness of Literature and Art results in this: it establishes the authority of the Ideal, even when faith in the Ideal creates new heavens of Immortal Life as well as a new earth.

A creed should not be the speculations of a few individuals, but the outcome of the total energies of mankind at work through all the centuries. It cannot be that any theology is of importance that does not report itself in actual use. And the farther the world advances the more inevitable will appear the terms of religion that are absolutely essential to its progress.

And this Twentieth-Century Revelation of truth, right, character, brotherhood, the ideal, God,—iden-

tical with that of Liberal Christianity,—and which is, as it were, being written on the sky in letters of light for all nations to read, is, after all, but the simple gospel whispered by Jesus in the ears of his disciples as they walked the fields of Galilee.

WORKS OF WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

Size, 6 x 8 1-2; pages, 1060; price, \$1.00 *net*, postage, 24 cents.

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By his nephew, William Henry Channing

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25 Beacon Street, Boston

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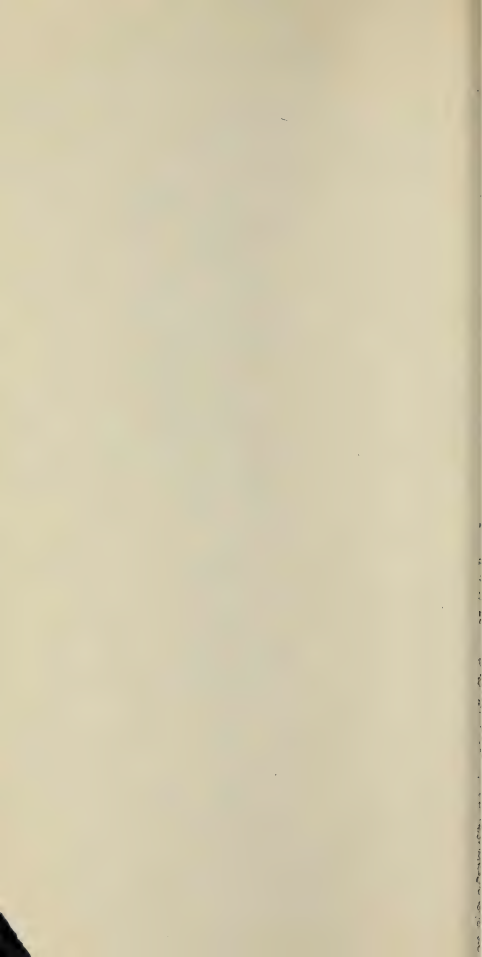
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FIVE POINTS
OF
OUR FAITH

BY

REV. CHARLES E. ST. JOHN

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON



APR 12 1917

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

Sooner or later all mankind must come to an agreement upon the conception of God as love. The wise and tender love that is set forth in a noble human parent is the type of what we understand perfect love to be. Take a love that is personal, responsible, and wise, a love so wise that it can on occasion employ severity as the truest expression of itself, so patient that it never loses its strength, howsoever undeserving its object for the moment becomes, and so tender that it is always animated by complete interest in its object, and never by any selfish motive: in your thought lift this type of wondrous love to perfection, that is to say, add to it eternal knowledge and power, and you have the conception of God which is the best the world has thus far reached. It is the conception of God, the heavenly Father, as Jesus knew him. Having this idea concerning God, we can draw certain inferences from it.

First, the idea involves personality. This kind of love is a moral force, exerted by a being conscious of what he is doing. As a father's or mother's love is an intentional clinging to a soul somewhat dependent upon it, so is the love of God for us a conscious and intelligent force. We can personally know our God as we know the spiritual nature of the human father or mother.

Second, this conception of God provides a vital place for prayer and worship. To the Infinite One who loves me my heart responds, not merely with the giving of my whole heart's love, but with a permanent mood of trust and fellowship which expresses itself in prayer and in worship. My worship is the exalted reverence I give to the Eternal Perfection. My prayer is my constant spiritual effort to understand and live in harmony with the Eternal Love that uplifts my life. God being love, we can commune with him concerning the best interests of life in essentially the same manner in which a child communes with a trusted parent. Communion with a parent is called confidence, but communion with the Eternal Perfection is confidence deepened into prayer.

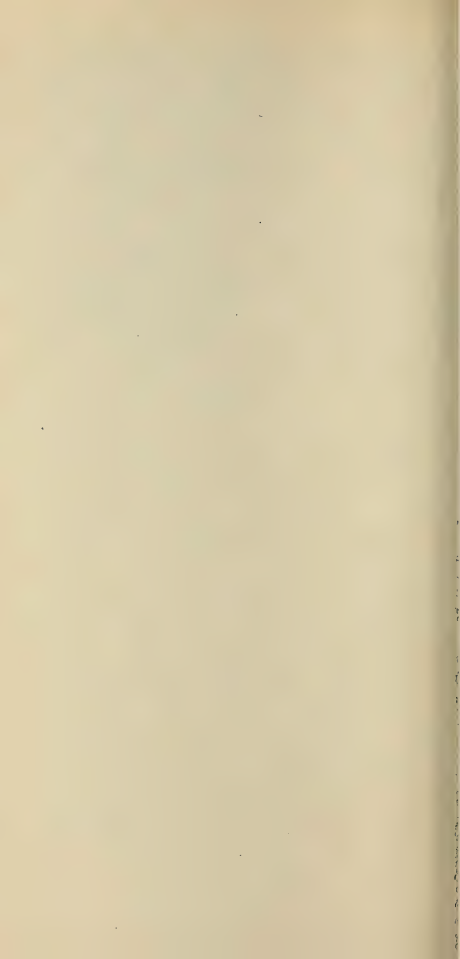
Third, this conception of God carries with it into every human life a noble self-respect as to the possibilities of one's life, and a deathless hope as to the outcome of those possibilities. Since God loves me, I know that I am worth something to him. It is, therefore, a matter of secondary importance what my comrades on earth judge me to be. In my heart I must respect myself because I am a child of God, and must by that self-respect be given power against temptation. Since the Eternal loves me, there is no moment when I can lose hope as to the outcome of my struggles against temptation and difficulty.

Fourth, this conception of God brings to all who hold it an exalted faith in the value of good works. Whosoever is trying to do right is lining himself up with the Eternal Righteousness, and the forces of the Almighty are going to act through his little life. The ultimate moral victory of all souls is wrapped up in this unswerving faith in good works. How shall any of the children of God ultimately fail? How shall any miss the entrance into the kingdom of God, inasmuch as God cares for each one with absolute impartiality? Though all other influences fail

to arouse the sinner, and though he turn again and again to his folly and weakness, the eternal God does not desert him or fail to touch him at every moment with the influence which at that moment is best calculated to bring him to himself. So long as I am convinced that God loves all his children, I cannot lose the conviction that somehow and somewhere that love will prevail over all that drags any of the children down,—even at last over wilfulness in the sinner himself.

Fifth, this conception of the Fatherhood of God blots out the fear of death. I sleep and I wake again refreshed by the sleep, wake into a day which has not been soiled by the folly I was guilty of before I slept,—wake, that is, to fresh opportunity and with new strength in my nature. So, when I die, I wake again to a day untouched by my former mistakes or sins, wake the same personality that I was before, but freed from many things that hampered it. Refreshed as by sleep, I wake to the tremendous and unimagined glories of new opportunities in the larger realm. If I die in my follies and sins or in my virtues and victories, as the case may be, I wake, the same personality, to carry in my nature the

results of what I have been, and to have my dealings with the larger opportunities of the new world enfeebled or ennobled by the memory that I carry on. Nevertheless, it is a real awakening to a genuine opportunity, and I face the moment of it, now or whenever it comes, with an unwavering courage, based upon my knowledge that through sleeping and waking, through life and death and life again, I, God's child, am upheld by the everlasting arms.



THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

The conception that all men are brethren regardless of race, time, and condition is distinctly a religious axiom. It is an inevitable deduction from the conception of the Fatherhood of God. Until we understand that we are children of God, it is not clear that we are brothers to one another. Human life looked at from the point of view of history or of present conditions gives but inadequate hints concerning this fundamental bond. We recognize it and obey it only in so far as we are religious in spirit.

This principle of the brotherhood of man is a test of the practical bearing of one's faith, a motive in control of human intercourse rather than an authoritative rule for the organization of society. Brotherhood does not necessarily mean that we must supplant present methods of ownership with socialism, must have democracy instead of monarchy. It does not inevitably lead to any kind of a reor-

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ganization of the social order. Furthermore, it does not demand any specific surrender of personal freedom. Loving my neighbor as myself, I am yet honorably free to love one neighbor more than another, because the one is more worthy of friendship or more suited to be my friend.

Governments, parties, nations, churches, business firms, and some of our personal friendships are matters of temporary convenience, and have their day and their passing usefulness. The law of brotherhood is a deeper and a grander thing. It has to do with eternity as well as with time. It provides the inner spirit under which local conditions are to be guided. Just in so far as this inner spirit is dominant, it will blot out of the temporary associations of mankind everything that is selfish and evil. The law of brotherhood gives no place in life to sharp practice, trickery, distrust, or war. None of these evils is essential to the continuance of any righteous aspect of the present social order or of any developments therefrom that may prove convenient for mankind as the years come and go. Take, for instance, the matter of personal friendships. These

may be sought happily and freely, while at the same time every soul remembers that all souls are the children of God, each one of them as dear to God as any other. White or black, wise or ignorant, virtuous or sinful, high or low, all men are the children of God; and to his perfect and measureless love equally dear. The limitations of time and space prevent me from holding all men equally dear to myself; but, if I never forget that they are all equal in the love of God, I shall, even in the full happiness of my personal reservations and limited friendships, be able to hold toward all men, as fast as I meet them, an attitude of unselfishness and entire justice.

Whenever one is called upon to deal in any manner with another human life, one ought to be able to do so with patience, mercy, considerateness, truth, and justice. There are no circumstances which justify one's failing to confront life in this attitude which is the outcome of the recognition that all men are children of God. If any one is tempted to overreach or otherwise wrong another person, let him call himself back to the higher life again by simply saying to himself, "That person is as dear to God as I am." The man of

wealth and power must say this when he is dealing with the poverty-stricken and inefficient toiler, the discouraged and half-starved bearer of the world's hardships must remember this when he is looking at the extravagances of the heedless man of fashion. The rulers and the ruled, the prosperous and the unfortunate, the strong and the weak, must each and every one remember this fact when he thinks of other men. When this is done, the law of brotherhood will take command of all men's lives, no matter what the system of government or of business may happen to be, and in so doing it will prove to be the glorious foundation of justice between man and man. In selfishness I may pray for divine help against the rights of another person or nation, but under the law of brotherhood it becomes an insult to the heavenly Father for any man or nation to pray for success as against another man or nation. Again and again it appears that God appoints men and nations unto certain services for humanity, but by the law of brotherhood and sonship we know that God has never loved one man or one nation above another. There has never been a "chosen people."

How are we to apply the law of brotherhood? Simply by confronting day by day our duties and opportunities in a spirit of unselfishness and open-hearted justice. We are to meet each person with utter frankness, believing in the essential divineness of all human souls, and ready to esteem each one as God esteems him, and so give him liberty and opportunity to play his natural part in the affairs of life. Now and again under the rule of this deepest law of life an individual is compelled to render some sacrifice. When those moments come, let every child of God be brave and true, regarding the sacrifice, even though it be of life itself, as a necessary part of the day's work, though not as a thing to be sought after as if it were a pre-eminent virtue to do hard things. We are not to seek the path of sacrifice, we are to seek simply the path of kindness and justice and right. Sometimes this is hard, sometimes it is easy. Whichever it proves to-day or to-morrow for our souls, we can press right onward cheerfully and bravely, just so long as we remember what it means to be a child of God engaged in common undertakings with the beloved multitude of the sons of God.

THE LEADERSHIP OF JESUS.

What a joy it is to have a teacher whose life is in every way on the plane of his teachings, a leader whose unfailing power lies in the simplicity and attainableness of the ideals he sets forth! There are those who still love to think of Jesus as a Saviour. Doubtless there are individuals who need the kind of help that is expressed in the old idea of a savior, persons so weak and dependent that some strong friend must lift their burdens for them. Doubtless, moreover, there are moments and situations when the strongest of our race may accept self-sacrificing aid from another. But for most men and under most conditions Jesus is a savior only in the sense in which a great military leader who comes upon a lost field just in time to reconstruct the battle, impart courage to the soldiers' hearts, and lead them back to victory, is a savior. Such a general does not in person assume the suffering and the fighting, and so win the

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victory. On the contrary, he inspires the men in the ranks to endure suffering, do the fighting, and win the victory. He saves the day, but only by wise leadership and inspiring example, not by personal achievement. Such is our modern conception of Jesus as a savior. He saves the day in many a moral struggle by the power of his leadership over human souls rather than by the amount of the work he does himself or the magnitude of the burdens he takes upon his shoulders.

Study whatsoever incident you will in the career of Jesus, and you will find that the lasting power of it lies not so much in what Jesus himself was doing for others as in the glory of the ideal he was setting forth to inspire self-sacrificing, successful action on the part of innumerable others. One who takes this conception of the power of the life of Jesus will inevitably make little use of the term "savior," preferring the more accurate term of "leader." Jesus is the greatest of the world's leaders because he leads in the deepest things of life, and because, by his unclouded success in personally obeying his own ideals, he has made it clear that all men may live on the same high plane. As a leader, he is brought

near to us by the perfection of his life. He sets us free from that mistaken notion that to be faulty is to be human. This is not true. To be faulty is to be something less than human. The nearer moral perfection we get, the closer do we come to the human ideal, the true sonship to God. Jesus has been and is the closest spiritual friend of every man who is obeying high ideals, because he is strictly human, because the perfect things we see in him are made by him so plain and convincing as to make us understand we can be like him. Whosoever could discover a flaw in the moral nature and life of Jesus would by that act set Jesus apart from human life and make him less of a leader for the world. On the other hand, whosoever even faintly understands the moral greatness of Jesus must hereby recognize that moral greatness is possible for himself.

The leadership of Jesus consists in the convincing revelation of the beauty of the perfect life which he set forth. The more we think of him, the more we must yield to the power of splendid ideals and to the joy of hero-worship, that mood of fine admiration which does more to strengthen one in the face of temptation

and to lead one on to the moral heights of life than any other motive could. So far as our moral growth is concerned, it is better for us to admire a good soul than to fear punishment, better for us to meditate upon exalted principles than to feel that we are driven onward in an unwilling spirit by some mysterious power, whose commands we do not understand. We are a world of progressive spirits. In every moment of life the things that can help us most are light, inspiration, and leadership. We may at times need punishment, but that is a temporary and slight thing. We may at times need help from without or from above, but that, again, is exceptional and temporary. What we continually need is what Jesus gives, the influence of ideas that thrill our souls, arouse our fainting courage, and convince us day by day that we can do the good things that we desire to do.

Jesus leads not by saving, but by guiding; he leads by virtue of having himself been on earth that lovely and perfect moral power which all the children of God may be; he leads by the directness and power with which he has set forth the fundamental principles of man's growth.

and of the soul's relation to God; he leads because he has set forth unto all men in absolute perfection the sublime ideal of the life of self-surrender. Following after him, we are inspired to seek, not our own will, but God's will, and to seek our own happiness only in so far as it is embodied in the eternal happiness of all souls.

Such a leader as this the world can never outgrow or dispense with. Inasmuch as this is a leader who has not undertaken to do anything once for all as an atoning sacrifice for all human souls, independence and personal initiative are left forever to each newly rising soul. For the winning of his own victories and the building up of his own character each soul forevermore may take, if he will, the matchless inspiration of a life which in itself succeeded perfectly in obedience to the eternal laws of the soul's growth. The strongest may always accept such leadership as this, the weakest may always find power to lay hold on it.

SALVATION BY CHARACTER.

In proportion as Christianity attains its full success there is less and less need of the aspect of Christianity expressed in the word "salvation." More and more it is becoming clear that the word "salvation" as expressed something purely philanthropic rather than a theological truth. It is when men are trying to help others who are in trouble that salvation enters into life. Certainly in liberal religious thought it is recognized on all hands that there never has been any universal condemnation of mankind from which all have needed to be saved. Whenever an individual has fallen into the power of evil, he needs to escape from that pitfall either by his own exertions, which is the best way, or by aid from another, which is usually forthcoming from some quarter. The explorer in an unknown land either through timidity and unadvisedness or through excess of courage may become lost. It is then well if

those who are interested in him take the trouble to search him out and save him. So, when the individual is beset by the difficulties and perils of practical life, when he is baffled by his own ignorance, or downcast amid his perils, or misled by his lack of moral power, he becomes an object of more or less solicitude on whose behalf somebody should assume the rôle of rescuer or savior. Furthermore, the perils to which individuals are exposed are not all confined to the present time. Perils await us in the future, some of them akin to perils with which we are familiar, some of them, doubtless, of a wholly unforeseen character. In regard to these future perils of our souls it is a great blessing if we have friends or a friend wise enough so to lead us on our way as to minimize the dangers we must confront.

From this point of view it must be stoutly maintained that there is no one peril to which all souls are by their common nature exposed. On the contrary, there are and have been many souls upon whom there never has rested the need of any kind of salvation. They have been in themselves strong, noble, and morally progressive. From the Christ-like dis-

position of such souls as these we get that deeper comprehension of life by which we understand that the thought of moral progress and the power for it are nobler and broader in spirit than the belief that souls are lost and in need of rescue. Progress rather than the search for salvation gives the modern Christian conception of the course of life.

If this ground is justly taken, it is clear that the human power that helps each one along and inspires one to aid another is the power of noble character. Each gain in personal goodness makes possible another gain in the individual life, and, when an individual reaches out to lift another up from the dominion of trouble or weakness, the power whereby he is useful is that of character. This is as true of Jesus, the world's pre-eminent Saviour, as it is of any other helpful soul. He has been a power of salvation by virtue of that nobleness in him which arouses courage and character in those whom he touches. Jesus is not a Saviour by virtue of his influence with God, not a Saviour by virtue of his carrying burdens and enduring punishments on behalf of others. He is a Saviour by virtue of the greatness of nature that has made his life a

moral inspiration to the world. By his character Jesus saves certain individuals that are lost and that happily receive the moral inspiration of the Christ. His work is upon man after man, not upon humanity as a whole in this matter.

Unitarians believe in "Salvation by Character"; but, inasmuch as it is the character in which they believe rather than the salvation, their thought would be more nobly expressed in some such phrase as "We believe in the good life, in the pure heart, in the righteous motive." As is commonly said from Unitarian pulpits, character is salvation, character is heaven. Examined in this light, the phrase "salvation by character" verges on redundancy as if one were uttering the futile word, "Character is character." The time-honored word "salvation" will linger so long as the world is as heavily oppressed by sin and folly and ignorance as it is to-day. It will under these conditions remain a word truly expressive of the need of individuals that are especially troubled or downcast; but, just in so far as the individual rises above his sins and selfishness toward some lofty plane of goodness, just to that extent it would become true

to say of that individual that what has happened to him is not so much salvation as it is growth, advance, achievement. What we all need is to become wiser and stronger in our moral force, and, as we achieve that growth, we free ourselves from our limitations and our errors.

The best salvation a man wins for himself, it being nothing more nor less than his onward way toward the larger and fuller life of God. A lesser salvation that is more or less often necessary is that which we receive from the brotherly help given by another soul who is thus to us a saviour. On the other hand, that helpful brother by what he does for us in stimulating our moral growth is putting forth the power of his own personal growth in the noblest conceivable fashion. To hope for and to accept from another salvation is an unfortunate necessity resting upon the few. To give this salvation to those that are in need is man's grandest service to his fellows. By our influence as saviours each in his own small way we come nearest to living in the spirit of God. By the sublime, divine perfection of his influence in this direction Jesus displayed a character supreme among the good of our race.

Are there burdens, sorrows, or sins resting upon your soul to-day? Endure them or fight them with a pure heart, and you will conquer. Are there perils awaiting you in the future? Prepare for them by the building up of righteousness in your soul. You need do nothing more; for there are no troublesome conditions of life here or hereafter for which the preparation of a pure heart, an unselfish motive, and a steady growth in goodness is not absolutely sufficient. From all this the intelligent reader can readily infer that there is an opposite truth; namely, that every man who meets his difficulties with an impure heart, a selfish purpose, and a sinful course is certain to meet on earth and in the hereafter conditions and penalties of a kind hardly to be foreseen in their grimness and severity. Such a man is in need of salvation.

THE PROGRESS OF MANKIND ONWARD AND UPWARD FOREVER.

The weight of conviction here is on the word "forever." We look forward confidently to material, intellectual, and moral progress on the earth so long as the human race exists here. This limited amount of progress, however, gives but scanty satisfaction as a substitute for immortality. Men of science are already foretelling a remote period at which the earth will cease to be habitable.

We like to think of our personal influence as passing on year after year in the hearts and lives of our successors upon the earth, but this again is a poor substitute for immortality.

When a man lies at the point of death and we desire to say something that shall lift up his heart, it takes but a moment to discover the utter futility of either of the above thoughts as a basis for comfort or inspiration. In the moment of

weakness when physical strength is departing, it is only the thought of a man's own continued activity that can put a light into the weary eyes or bring a smile to the drooping lips. Happily, the Unitarian church is able to present to men the inspiration of a belief in personal immortality. Progress is not something pertaining simply to the earth, not something which merely concerns those who come after us. Progress has to do with the individual, and concerns that individual forever. The proclamation of eternal life for all souls carries with it the only adequate recognition of the value of the human soul.

This conviction does more than any other thought that has ever touched humanity toward the re-enforcement of courage, patience, and morality in tried or enfeebled souls. We have an endless opportunity to win progress in the lines that are worthy of our pursuit. Every human soul can deal with its present problems under the inspiring conviction that, however he may be defeated for the moment, he will surely attain victory at last in every unselfish and worthy phase of growth. We are destined to make progress out of all weakness. Sinner

though we be, we shall find a way of advance out of the dominion of temptation. Ignorant though we be at present, we shall be able so to deal with our souls as to move onward into knowledge. Progress into light, progress into moral power, progress into all goodness, that is the path that lies before each one. It is a path that may have turnings, but cannot come to an end. In other words, every soul has time enough to become by his own natural onward way efficient for the doing of good things, lovable by virtue of the deepening unselfishness within, and in all ways noble by virtue of personal moral attainment. Now the roots of these splendid possibilities are imbedded in every soul: each one by birthright is a child of God, and as such possessed of the possibilities of all good. This is true of the most forlorn and the most wicked of our race; and, because this is true, it is worth every man's while to be helpful among his fellow-men. Helpfulness is an influence never thrown away. The more one can do to aid the growth of these roots of righteousness in earth's unfortunate, the more satisfaction he will have in his own life, and the speedier he will make his own progress.

In dealing with our weaker brethren, each one of us must "hope evermore and believe," confident that the hope is the right mood in which to deal with life, and that the belief in one's fellow-men is the only true comprehension of their possibilities.

When once a man has seen the shining vision of his immortal life, his everlasting, efficient, and satisfying personal growth, certain other questions which trouble many souls become to him a slight moment. He is no longer troubled by the thought of punishment for his sins. Of course, he must face the consequences of his sins. He will be glad to do so, for he knows that by facing the inevitable he will win his way onward into victory. He will no longer be beset by the fear of death; for what weight has death in the counsels of the immortal? He will cease to be anxious as to the mere details concerning place and condition of the life following the incident of death. Confident that he will be himself there as here, confident that the conditions will be such as befit the onward way of an immortal soul, he puts out of his mind the idle meditation upon the unknown and content to push onward toward that

known, himself a glorious power able to
deal, day by day, with the new day as
it comes.



A STATEMENT OF UNITARIAN BELIEF

Representing the average opinion of Unitarians.

I believe in *God, the Eternal One*, whom alone I worship.—Deut. vi. 4-5; Matt. iv. 10; Matt. vi. 9; Mark xii. 29; John iv. 23; Eph. iv. 6; Rev. xxii. 8, 9.*

* Unitarians regard the Bible, not as an infallible Authority, to which they must appeal in support of their theological beliefs, but as the greatest of religious classics, containing the best expression of spiritual experience.

In citing "texts," their purpose is to call attention to the fact that Unitarian teachings concerning the deep things of life are in harmony with those set forth by the recognized spiritual leaders of the race.

Unitarians use the Bible as a text-book in religious culture and as a source of inspiration in devotional services.

I believe in *This World* as a beautiful result of God's creative thought.—Gen. i. 31; Job ix. 9, 10; Ps. xvi. 6, xix. 1, 2; xcvi. 6; Ps. c. 3; cxxxix. 14; Ecc. iii. 11; xi. 7; Matt. vi. 28, 29.

I believe in *Man's Natural Capacity for Righteousness*.—Job. xvii. 9; Ps. viii. 5; xlii. 1; cxviii. 19; Matt. v. 48; Matt. xix. 14; Rom. ii. 15.

I believe in *Human Intelligence* as our final authority for truth and hold that at last it will lead us out of all error and ignorance into glorious light.—Ecclesiasticus iv. 17, 18; Luke xii. 57; John viii. 32; Acts xvii. 11; 1 Cor. xiv. 20; 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18; 1 Thess. v. 21.

I believe in the *Constant Presence of God in World and man*.—Deut. viii. 5, 6; Ps. lxxxix. 15; cxxxix. 1-18; Isa. lix. 21; Jer. xxxi. 3; Acts xvii. 23-28; 1 John iv. 16.

(OVER)

I believe in *Prayer* as man's natural effort to hold communion and live in harmony with God.—Deut. iv. 29; Ps. cxlv. 18; Isa. xl. 31; lv. 1; Matt. vi. 6-13; Matt. vii. 7, 8; Luke xi. 13.

I believe in the *Church* as an organized effort to teach men to love God and to live as members of one great family.—John xiii. 35; Rom. xii. 4, 5. 1 Cor. xii. 4 to xiii. 13; Heb. xiii. 1; 1 John iv. 21.

I believe in *Jesus* as a human example so inspiring that we can find in the relation existing between him and the heavenly Father the ideal illustration of the relation which should exist between all persons and God.—John xv. 9; John xvii. 18-21; John xx. 17; Rom. viii. 14.

I believe in *Human Goodness* as the object of man's highest aspiration; to have a pure heart and its sure advances in righteousness is more important than all beliefs.—Prov. iv. 23; Matt. v. 6, 8; Luke xv. 10, 23, 24; Cor. xiii. 13; Gal. v. 14; 1 Tim. i. 5; 1 Tim. iv. 8. Jas. i. 27.

I believe in the *Life Eternal* for all souls, with infinite time for the reason to lay hold on truth, endless opportunity for character to grow to its completeness by every necessary path of joy or of sorrow, of reward or of punishment.—Isa. lv. 7; Ps. xxiii. 3; Matt. xviii. 14; John xvii. 3; Rom. viii. 38, 39; 1 Cor. ii. 9; Gal. vi. 7, 8; Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14; 1 Tim. vi. 12; Rev. xxi. 1-7.

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APR 18 1917

SEEING JESUS

BY

REV. FREDERIC H. KENT

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

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APR 12 1917

SEEING JESUS.

"Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see."—JOHN i. 46.

IF Jesus were to walk among men to-day and listen to the many voices lifted in dispute about him, would he not repeat that half-sad, half-reproachful question he asked of Philip, his disciple? "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me?" For, notwithstanding our familiarity with the story of his life, we do not know him; and the sign of our ignorance is this, that we are still trying to define him, still quarrelling because we cannot agree upon a form of words which shall adequately and exhaustively express his inmost nature. If we had begun to know him truly, we should have realized that it is no more necessary to define him, in order to receive the utmost benefit he can impart, than it is necessary to define a man in order to be enriched by his friendship, or God, in order to enter into the communion of prayer and worship, and receive the blessing of his love. We should have realized, too, that there is no more possibility of defining Jesus in ultimate terms than there is possibility of defining God or man or "the meanest flower that blows." Behind every name that we apply to him is veiled a mystery that baffles our thought.

Yet the mystery of Jesus' nature is no new or strange one. It is the same which meets us on every side and baffles all our knowledge. It is the one ultimate

mystery of all being whose unity is affirmed in Tennyson's familiar lines:—

“Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies;
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower; but, if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.”

We study a lily or a violet, analyze it, peer at it through the lens, reduce it to the very cells of which it is composed, and at the end we know only that in it the mysterious something which sometimes we call life, and sometimes Nature, and sometimes God, is organizing that equally mysterious something which we call matter into forms of use and beauty. Where that force or energy or spirit begins or ends we cannot guess. It is as truly in the tiniest grain of pollen dust which carries in its atom the potency of new plants, as in the rootlet which threads its way to hidden moisture, or the leaf which drinks in the sunlight. We study man, and find a body more elaborately organized, lifted to more varied functions, kindled into thought and will and affection; yet, when we have done, we have only the same uncomprehended matter that was in the lily, and the same mysterious life using it, informing it, making it to live. There is nothing in the universe which is not related somehow to the One Life that is eternal. There is nothing in the universe that is not, in some sense, identical with Deity. And shall we, who cannot define that relationship in the case of the violet, who cannot part the human from the divine in any newborn child,—shall we flatter ourselves that we can parcel out the nature of Jesus into divine and human?

Shall we go farther, and assume to determine the eternal woe or bliss of human souls in accordance with their ability or willingness to accept the result of our dissection? As always, fools will rush in where angels fear to tread; but they who have acquired a just estimation of their powers will attempt a more modest task.

Our disputes about Jesus will never be settled, for the battle has to be fought on a field where human logic has no footing. We may hope that they will cease for want of disputers, as the beautiful face of that great Friend of men emerges from the mists of speculation which have so long concealed him. Beauty and truth are greater than anything that can be said about them; and the more we perceive them, the less patient are we with mere comment. The appreciative soul resents the garrulity which insists upon explaining a glorious sunset or a heroic deed, marring with words the silent communion by which its beneficent influence is imparted. Many volumes have been filled with what men have learnedly thought about Jesus; but from them all the loving disciple turns gladly to the peasants of Galilee, who saw him face to face and caught for the world the impress of his personality. What any one thinks about Jesus is unimportant, when there is Jesus himself before us. The important thing, as with every great spiritual helper, is to get into relation with him, to clear away the obstructions which choke the channels by which his influence flows to our souls. So the one adequate thing which can be said by one man to another about Jesus is what Philip said to Nathanael,—“Come and see.” Nathanael was bewildered in a maze of other men’s thought about the Messiah,

for whom his race looked so busily that they were blinded by the dust of their own speculation. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" he asked when Philip ran to tell him the Messiah was found. "Come and see," said Philip. "Can any divine thing come out of humanity?" ask men to-day, weary and disappointed with their long search for the soul's helper amid the dust of creeds. "Come and see" is the only answer. For argument and theory fail utterly to accomplish that which is the effect only of spiritual contact. We can help each other best by trying to make clear the figure which appeared so long ago to the people of Galilee and Jerusalem, so that we shall see him as they did, and feel the same influence that they felt.

But can we so see him? We cannot look directly into his face and listen to his voice, and we are apt to count this a misfortune. We feel that we should gain so much in certainty if we could only receive his influence without the mediation of other lives. Yet it may not be so. When we consider how blind men are to the beauties of Nature until some artist has transferred them to canvas; how little we notice the sanctity and worth of common life until some poet has extricated it from the dust and confusion and given a voice to the dumb divinity: when we remember how many people came within hearing of Jesus' voice, and passed on unheeding, unreleased from the bonds of ambition, care, and pleasure: when we consider all this, we may not be too sure that we should have been among those whose hearts proved good ground for the seed he scattered. If we are not to-day quickly sensitive to the spiritual influence of pure and loving souls about us, we might easily

have missed the significance of that unassuming figure then. For then as now we should have been preoccupied with business, politics, family cares, and social ambitions. To-day, if we look upon him at all, we see him as one who has survived, while all that was contemporary has vanished or endured chiefly by virtue of connection with him. There may be cause for happiness in the fact that the character of Jesus is reflected to us by a mirror which, while it gathers to a focus all the light that streamed from him, refuses to reflect any other figure. For thus, though the image may suffer minor distortions from the imperfections of the mirror, it gains intensity from the suppression of obscuring objects.

Advantageous or not, the fact remains that we see Jesus only as in a mirror. To behold him, we must go back to the first three Gospels. Yet we are not limited to the ideas of him which the writers of the Gospels consciously sought to impart. The stories which they relate contain much that is only opinion, colored by the writer's preconceptions and the prevailing ideas of the time. Many a man has become so confused by the inconsistency of the narrative with itself and with established principles of knowledge that he has given up in despair the attempt to form a just conception of Jesus out of the elements which the Gospels directly furnish. He has found himself at the end farther than ever from living contact with the life that *was* the gospel to those whom it touched. But beneath the surface of the narrative, shining through it here and there, are elements of an image of Jesus which combine into a perfect and consistent whole,—an image of beauty, truth, and power. In every page of the Gospels there is

revealed the impression made by Jesus upon human lives,—not only the evangelists, but the friends who walked or sat at table with him, the audiences which gathered, attracted by a novelty, the enemies who opposed him, the casual onlookers who cared nothing for him, but dropped an occasional comment. We can trace lives altered in their current. We can discover acts, friendly and hostile, inspired by his presence. We catch glimpses of emotions quickened by his words or by the mere glance of his eye. Out of these impressions, made upon the most varying characters, often inarticulate, often unconsciously revealed, often at variance with the writer's own opinion, there can be constructed an image of Jesus which is almost wholly free from the aberrations which always cling to individual opinion, and which is distinguished by a self-consistency rarely to be found in historical portraits or even in the conceptions we form of living persons. So long as we study only the acts and words of a man, we are puzzled by their seeming inconsistency, because we separate them in thought from the moving cause and the objects upon which they are directed. The same cause may produce many varying effects. The blow of a sledge will shatter a crystal, but weld into closer cohesion the particles of soft iron. The dawn that opens the morning-glory in dewy freshness makes the primrose fade and wither. The cause is one. The difference is due to the nature of the things upon which it is exerted. So the same spirit in a man will produce opposite effects upon the pure and the sensual, the noble and the base, the loving and the selfish. Yet the different effects will point to the **same** cause, and together yield a more adequate

conception of its character than any mere study of the methods and means through which it works. And he who has struggled in vain to reconcile the reported words and acts of Jesus to one another and to the known laws of nature, may find an unlooked-for simplicity and unity by studying his character as it is mirrored in the effects he produced upon different men, with the means and methods eliminated; while at the same time he avoids any question whether the reported means were credible or legitimate. Into this human mirror I invite you to look with me for the image of Jesus it reflects, remembering that we seek no ultimate definition, and that behind all our words the great mystery of all being remains. What was the impression produced by Jesus upon those who came in contact with him, and what must he have been to produce such an impression?

The observation is unavoidable that, so far as we can read the conduct of those men, it was a man they were aware of in their midst. They saw Jesus eat and drink, grow weary and sleep and wake refreshed, sorrow and rejoice, pray and give thanks, like themselves; and they never dreamed that they were dealing with a being of a different nature. Can you imagine men knowingly laying traps to catch God in error or inconsistency? Can you imagine Peter rebuking God, or Judas betraying God, or Pilate and the high priest putting God to death? Some, indeed, like Peter, took him for the Messiah; but no Jew ever thought of the Messiah as other than a man inspired by God. The populace of Jerusalem took up stones to stone him because they mistakenly supposed that he had declared himself to be God, so revolting was the blasphemous thought to their

minds. There is not a word or act in all the record of Jesus' lifetime which supports the supposition that any with whom he came in contact entertained so much as a surmise that he was other than a man.

So, too, in the traits of character which they marked, humanity was always present. True, even enmity failed to discover in him some things which are usually found in men. Hatred was baffled by the absence of common weaknesses on which it could lay hold. He could not be terrified or bribed or seduced. They felt that at once. But the absence of cruelty, selfishness, lust, fear, does not constitute a refutation of humanity. For these traits do not constitute the essence of humanity. These are the things which connect men with the beasts,—an inheritance not yet outgrown. The most truly human life is that in which these are reduced, conquered, rooted out. The distinctive traits of humanity are those which distinguish men from the brutes. They are thought, affection, self-control, intelligent purpose, sympathy, aspiration, faith, hope, and love. Whatever may be the speculations of theologians about the race, we are all agreed in this when we pass judgment upon persons. He who wins from his fellows the title "a true man" is one in whom integrity, self-control, sympathy, kindness, humility, and aspiration for nobler life are predominant. Cruelty, selfishness, cowardice, and lust are qualities that earn for a man the name of brute.

The character of Jesus was ideally, if not characteristically, human. Its broken arcs may be traced in many a life, and not seldom a close approach to the perfect round. He surpassed, if you feel competent to the comparison, all other men who have ever lived.

Yet his superiority was of degree, and not of kind; the perfection of the human, not a contrast to what that perfection would be if actually attained. It was the very humanness of him which awoke the ardent feelings of men. We neither hate nor love that with which we have nothing in common, whether it be higher or lower than ourselves. The hate of evil men as truly as the love of good men for Jesus, the ardent loyalty and the no less ardent opposition, are indications of the inevitable and legitimate comparison which each made between himself and Jesus. Some revered what called out the best in them to life and emulation. Others hated what shamed and condemned the worst in them which they would not relinquish. But all bore witness to the presence of a pure and lofty human soul.

Nevertheless, strong as was this impression of his humanity upon those who knew him personally, it was, perhaps, inevitable that later generations of his followers should swing to the opposite view. For the reports of him handed down by tradition soon lost the warmth of personality which was so large a factor in his living influence, while they came into minds already possessed by a theory of humanity which afforded no room for such a character as his. Their view of Jesus had to be adjusted to accepted standards of humanity: they could not adjust their standards to him. He does not, indeed, fit into a conception of man which contemplates only the past, which has not even begun to suspect that weakness and ignorance and sin do not constitute the final summing-up of human nature. If the manhood of that day or even the better manhood of our own were to be regarded as the ultimate standard,

we might agree with the Christians of the third and fourth centuries that Jesus was more than man. But it is a different view of humanity which has won acceptance in our time. We are beginning to discover that "Man is not Man as yet." For, as in the lower realm,

"Prognostics told

Man's near approach, so in man's self arise
August anticipations, symbols, types
Of a dim splendor ever on before
In that eternal circle life pursues."

The history of life, traced through the long struggle of the past, is throwing a light upon the future which transforms many an accepted idea. The signs are multiplying that man is not a fallen creature, but incomplete; not confined to the narrow actuality of the present, but already treading a path which leads infinitely upward; most truly characterized by capacities and traits which are but germinal as yet in aspirations and hopes. As the centuries pass, we see the race making great strides forward. Unbridled passion gives place to self-control, cruelty to kindness, indifference to sympathy, superstitious awe to clear-eyed reverence and love for moral worth and beauty. The number of individuals grows ever larger in whom the higher traits gain strength while the lower diminish. We are beginning to understand that the typical man is of the future, and we see already the heralds of his coming. It is into this view of man that Jesus fits, which he illuminates, giving positive form to our dim prevision. The mere affirmation of his humanity is inadequate. He was a man. But what a man!

Looking again into the mirror of the Gospels, let

us trace the positive image it reflects. The face we find there is very different from the sorrowful, down-cast visage we have regarded as a portrait of the Christ. It is first of all marked with the lines of spiritual power. Never did men reveal more convincingly the influence upon them of a strong soul. The passion which a soldier of Napoleon's Guard put into the words "My Emperor" bore witness to no more dominating a personality than that which made his Galilean fishermen leave all to follow him. Nor was it his friends alone who revealed it. Each bears witness after his own nature. The crowds who heard him speak muttered astonishment at the voice which reached heart and conscience as with authority. Many men and women saw their sin drawn to the surface through the scum of complacency and sensual pleasure which had concealed it from their own sight, and shed bitter tears. Men of wealth and learning were penetrated by doubts of the worth of things which they had regarded as the highest good, and sought instruction of one who evidently possessed a treasure they knew not of. Men who sat in the high places of civil and ecclesiastical dominion were dismayed by the silent menace of a force which threatened to destroy their very strongholds, and, like the weaker everywhere, plotted against that which they dared not meet in open conflict. So convincing was the impression of might that he made that there seemed no limit to his scope, and there were found observers ready to declare his visible control over the forces of Nature, the demons of disease, even death itself. To unravel the accounts of what he did is impossible. The conception of the natural world which prevailed at the

time is so different from ours that it is hardly profitable to discuss whether he did or did not perform any specific wonder which is reported. Before a court that does not admit the existence of demons in the persons of the insane or epileptic the question of the casting out of any particular demon has no standing. But beneath all the narratives is the unquestionable fact that he made men feel that they were in the presence of a spiritual force to which they could assign no bounds. They could only acknowledge by act as well as word its superiority to anything in their experience, and even in the humiliating shadow of the cross his friends affirmed that he lived triumphant and his enemies set a guard before his tomb. Such witness to the presence of a mighty soul is more convincing than any tale of miracle.

Next it is clear that they felt that this mighty power was absolutely enlisted in the service of love. The world has known strong men, and it has known loving men; but when has it known a man in whom such power was wielded by such love? The story of the temptation indicates the way men felt about him. Not his own bitter hunger, not the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, could move him to use his power for his private satisfaction. But did any suffer the pangs of sickness, the burden of oppression, the gloom of sorrow, there was no doubt or hesitation. They hastened to place themselves in his path, sure that, if his eye but glanced upon their need, he would relieve it. They felt no need of influence or special pleas. The stranger, the outcast, the man whom men scorned, might and did come with as much confidence as the most deserving.

Like the divine love, the love of Jesus seemed universal, asking nothing about men's merits, but only of their need.

Nor was it only the exertion of power which cost nothing that they learned to expect of him. He would *share* their sorrow and their pain. He would stand between them and their enemies, and receive the wounds meant for their hearts. As to his power, they could not assign limits, so his love transcended imagination. They came to think he would meet the ultimate test which Isaiah had suggested, and be willing to take upon himself the guilt of the whole world, with all its heavy punishment. Upon this conviction of limitless love in Jesus rests, I believe, the whole doctrine of the atonement, which as an historical event no theologian has ever been able to explain, but which is at least comprehensible, if it is seen to be a human attempt to express the belief that infinite love had come into the world.

Finally (for I can do no more than sketch outlines which any who will can fill from the material at hand), this supreme love was rooted in faith, or rather trust, in God. Even if it could be shown, what no one believes, that not one of the sayings attributed to Jesus is correctly reported, we should still be sure that he and his followers were conscious that trust in the fatherly goodness of God was the root of his life. For through every attempt to record his utterances this thought shines out. The truth which he illustrated by the lily of the field appears in almost every one of his discourses. He must have said many noble words which have not been preserved; and it is significant that, whenever his followers tried to tell what he had said, this one thought predominated.

It was the only clew by which they could explain or understand his patience, his sweetness, his unswerving fidelity through the shock and turmoil of his life. Upon them was laid the duty of living a life like his, and by an unconscious selection they seized upon the truth which it most concerned them to fix in their hearts. It was the rock upon which their lives must be founded, as his had been founded; the assurance which, through every experience, had maintained his soul in the peace that passeth understanding.

Here, then, in its main outlines is an image of Jesus which is ours beyond dispute, forever undisturbed by the most destructive criticism. For it is wholly independent of the historical accuracy of the Gospels. Did Jesus work miracles? Did he use the exact language of the Beatitudes or the Sermon on the Mount? The answer, interesting and valuable as it is in many respects, does not affect this vision of him. The means and methods by which he produced his lasting impression on men are not in question. Even though the historical accuracy of the Gospels should be rejected, their very existence proves that there lived a man who by some means exerted an unmatched and definable influence upon the minds of men, and from that effect our minds are led inevitably to the character of him who wrought it. Nor was it upon their minds alone. It reached their deepest motives, and transformed their lives. It made them trustful and loving and strong in their turn. It imparted to them a trust in God which bore them up through danger and sorrow and persecution. It filled them with a sense of life for which the grave had no terror. It touched them with its contagion; and made them love men and do them mighty service. As we study these

lives, new lines of grace and truth and beauty shine out in the life that was their inspiration. There comes to us across the ages the influence of a warm, living, loving spirit. His unshaken trust in God strengthens and confirms our struggling faith. His wide-embracing love fires us to new devotion, and sheds about us the cheering rays of the realized ideal. With growing faith and love the divine strength flows into us as into him, and we become able to serve men as he served them, relieving their misery, casting out the demons of pride and selfishness, inspiring them with hope and courage. It is this that makes him precious. We shall not care to define him when we become conscious of help and inspiration flowing from his life into ours. For we shall know him as we know the friends who walk spiritually with us, himself the greatest friend of all save God, his Father and our Father, the reality and the blessed influence of whose divine companionship with every soul is shown in the character of Jesus of Nazareth.

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FROM THE OLD FAITH TO THE NEW.

BY REV. WILLIAM M. BRUNDAGE, PH.D.

MANY people utterly fail to understand what a transition from the old faith to the new actually means. To them it seems like the giving up of all faith whatsoever, the absolute renunciation of religion. Let me illustrate the attitude of such persons.

Shortly after I had withdrawn from the church of the old faith in Albany, of which I was minister, and had begun Unitarian services in the theatre, I was approached in a public place by a good woman who was an active missionary worker in the city, in the following startling manner: "I am very glad to see you, Dr. Brundage, to ask you how you feel since you have given up the Lord Jesus Christ."

"But," I replied, "I have not given up Jesus Christ."

"You have certainly given up serving him."

"Not at all," I replied.

"You have given up loving him and honoring him, have you not?"

"Most certainly not. I never loved and honored Jesus Christ more than I do to-day."

"Why, I do not understand what you mean. Have you not become a Unitarian?"

To this good woman to become a Unitarian meant to cease to be a Christian.

A few weeks after this interview I noticed in my audience on Sunday night a prominent business man who was an officer of one of the most influential churches of the city. I wondered at his presence at our service, because I felt confident that he could

not be interested in our liberal gospel. Two or three days afterward he came to me, and explained why he had been present.

"I feel that I owe you an apology," he said. "When I saw it announced in the paper that you were to preach on the subject, 'What must we do to be saved?' I said to myself, I think I will go down and hear how easy the Unitarians make the way of salvation. Since the Unitarians give up all religion, their idea of salvation must be exceedingly lax. But, my dear sir, I find that I was mistaken. Your way of salvation is a —— sight harder than ours. We have some one to stand between God and ourselves and save us, while you teach that a man must save himself. Instead of being the easiest way of salvation, yours is the hardest way of all."

I was born and trained in a church of the old faith. My father was a clergyman in that church. I was taught as a boy to believe in a supernatural infallible Bible, in the Trinity, in the fall of man, in the vicarious atonement for sin, in salvation through faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, and in an eternal hell of conscious torment for all who rejected this salvation. When as a boy I sometimes doubted the truth of certain incidents in the Bible, I was urged to crush that doubt as "devil-born." I could find no peace of mind until I could affirm in an ecstasy of faith, "I do believe."

As I grew older and had become an orthodox minister, these doubts became more and more insistent, and the struggle to overcome them more and more difficult, until at last I learned that to doubt was not wrong, provided it was the means to a noble end, provided it led to a more worthy faith. Slowly but steadily the old supernatural sanctions of religion

gave place to new rational sanctions, and I won a faith for myself, a faith that at last was my very own.

Take, for instance, my belief in the Bible. I began with the old faith in an infallible book, consisting of the Old and New Testament scriptures, but I was not satisfied until I had selected from these scriptures a Holy Bible, a literature of moral and religious power that inspired and uplifted me. The greater part of the Old Testament and much in the New simply dropped out of my canon of Holy Scriptures. I could find no spiritual value in it. The noblest of the Psalms, the great passages of the Prophets, the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables of Jesus, and much of the teaching of Saint Paul remained. The heart of the old Bible remained, appreciated now as never before, and together with this my Holy Bible began to include the noblest passages from the gospel of Buddha Gautama, from the Bhagavad-Gita, from the writings of Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius, and from the great poets of the modern world. Again I began to see that, while the doctrine of the Trinity might be true as far as it went, it did not begin to go far enough, it did not begin to exhaust the fulness of the manifestations of God to man. A threefold manifestation of Deity! Why not affirm a million-fold manifestation?

Or take the doctrine of the Incarnation. My church was perfectly right in declaring its belief in the Incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth. But this truth simply pointed to the fact that God had incarnated himself in all men; that wherever goodness, truth, and love are found, God is found. I began to appreciate at last what Jesus meant when he taught his disciples to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven." Certainly, Jesus is the world's Saviour in the sense

that he revealed the only way whereby men can be saved,—the way of self-sacrificing love.

I began to see that the only rational justification of punishment for sin lies in the fact that the punishment is remedial. That the wrong-doer will be, must be, punished, as long as he persists in doing wrong is what the old doctrine of eternal punishment really means.

Through my study of physical science I learned to appreciate the meaning of natural laws, so that henceforth belief in miracles in the old sense became impossible, because they would imply an imperfection in the divine order. And so I might go on illustrating the transition that was going on within me from the old faith to the new. I kept on using the old phraseology, but into the old phrases I read a new meaning. Religion became a profounder reality to me with every passing year,—religion in the sense in which Jesus taught it and lived it, religion in the sense of love to God and love to man. My church signified to me fellowship in the religious life.

It was not until I had been for ten years a minister of the church of my parents that I was at last aroused to a thorough appreciation of the falseness of my position. The awakening came about in this manner. I was celebrating the communion of the Lord's Supper with my people, using the ritual enjoined by my church, when I came to these words in the prayer of consecration: "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a *full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.*" Suddenly it came to me as it had

never come before how different was the sense in which I was using these words from the sense in which my people were using them. Dared I, in that place, frankly explain to those fellow-worshippers just what I did not mean, and make perfectly plain to them just what I really meant? I had not consciously preached anything which I did not believe; but, on the other hand, I was in this solemn service using words which I did not mean in the plain sense in which they were originally used, in the sense in which most of my fellow-worshippers were now using them.

That moment I heard a voice sounding in the depths of my being, just as clearly as Jean Valjean in Victor Hugo's great romance is represented as having heard a voice speaking to him when he had made up his mind that he could not go and confess himself the true Jean Valjean, and the words I seemed to hear were these: "Thou hypocrite!"

Had I not solemnly promised when I was ordained to the ministry in my church that I would conscientiously teach only the doctrines that my church approved,—doctrines which I had affirmed then and there that I most sincerely believed and which I had at that time accepted in the sense in which my church held them? I certainly no longer believed them in that sense. What right had I then to stand there as a professed teacher of the old faith? I was a hypocrite. I would not presume to judge another in my place, but I must condemn myself. I rose from that service with one plain alternative before me, either I must withdraw from the ministry of my father's church or confess myself to my own conscience to be insincere. It did not take long for me to decide what I must do. I must withdraw from the ministry of my church. Just at a time when I felt that I had a gospel

to preach best worth the preaching, a gospel which I was convinced that great numbers of my fellow-men needed, I must leave the ministry and enter some other profession. For where could I find a church that would receive me upon my own terms, that would require of me no creed subscription whatsoever, that would leave me perfectly free to preach what I believed to be the truth? Where would I find a religious fellowship based not upon uniformity of belief, but upon the sharing of a common religious spirit?

I did not then know that there was a fellowship of this character in existence. I was familiar with the writings of the great leaders of the Unitarian movement, but I had been taught that modern Unitarianism was nothing but a cold, lifeless cult, whose adherents, while very cultured people, possessed no vital religion.

I attended the National Conference of Unitarian Churches that met in Saratoga in September, 1894, and was present when the new basis of fellowship in this Conference was unanimously adopted: "These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man, and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and practical aims."

I came away from that Conference with a joy and gratitude beyond all power of expression. Here was a religious fellowship in which I could feel at home, —a religious fellowship which guaranteed to every member, minister, and layman alike perfect freedom of belief, while it fostered the truest religious spirit and personal and social righteous character.

It was a happy day in my life when I was cordially

admitted to this church of the new faith. Do you wonder that I count it a high privilege to belong to the first religious organization in the history of the world to throw wide open its doors to earnest truth-seekers of all creeds, to welcome to its working fellowship the reverent agnostic as well as the confident believer? Is it too much to claim that the poet's dream already begins to be realized:—

“A nobler church shall come, whose covenant word
 Shall be the deeds of love. Not Credo then,
 Amo shall be the password* through its gates.
 Man shall not ask his brother any more,
 ‘Believest thou?’ but ‘Lovest thou?’ And all
 Shall answer at God’s altars, ‘Lord, I love.’
 For hope may anchor, Faith may steer, but Love,
 Great Love alone, is captain of the soul.”

FROM BAPTIST TO UNITARIAN.

BY REV. WILLIAM S. MORGAN, PH.D.

THAT I love the good Baptist folk goes without saying. I shall never cease to love them. I owe them all my early training. They started me upon my ministerial career and a thousand unconscious influences from this splendid body of Christians have entered into my life. The greatest thing I owe them is that I am a Unitarian. They always insisted they had no creed save the Bible. I studied this book faithfully, and became a heretic.

One hesitates to speak of the "Why I became," as it is a chapter from the holy book of the soul,—a story one is prone to keep from public gaze. Both my grandfathers were parsons. I early had the itch of prophecy. To be a foreign missionary was the height of my ambition. This grew upon me until, when once there was a strong appeal made to us in college to engage in this type of work, I almost made a public vow of consecration to undertake the task. My first sermonette was an attack upon Unitarianism. Unitarians were holding services in the Wellington School in my native town, and scattering their insidious literature abroad, and there was a holy zeal burning in me to offset this sort of thing.

The church in which I commenced preaching was a Calvinistic Baptist church, but even then I was not over-orthodox. Though quite willing to admit God had elected some to salvation, I was not prepared to admit any had been elected to damnation. I was called to book more than once for this heresy. Once I committed a very grave sin. I had declared to a

few of the members of the Young Men's Saturday Evening Meeting that I did not believe the blood of Jesus either in the literal or any other sense had efficacy to wash away our sins. An influential member said I should be excommunicated, but they forbore me.

In the Welsh college I attended theological discussion ran high. Once we were studying Ephesians in the Greek Testament class, and the question of universal salvation came up, and my attitude caused much bitterness of feeling among some of my classmates. My greatest sin, however, was the repudiation of the deity of Jesus. An earnest young man and a good scholar came to my study, and said to me that, since I was really an atheist, I should come out to the open, like Mr. Bradlaugh. I tried to prove I was not an atheist. It availed nothing. "Come out, like Bradlaugh. Tell the world that you are an atheist, and we shall all respect you," were his final words on the subject.

The greatest burden one's heresy has to bear is the accusation of superficiality. I was indeed bent upon escaping this as much as possible. In the Yale Divinity School I must look into the Bible more thoroughly. I must read the Old Testament carefully in Hebrew and the New in Greek, and follow carefully the mazes of exegesis, and peradventure this awful heresy that tormented me would be cured. The more I studied, the worse it grew. I soon learned that the theological course was no cure for heresy. I took as much work in philosophy as my time would allow. "Beware of metaphysics. It spoils the preacher," said one of my teachers. The notion of the deity of Jesus did not return to me. One Sunday evening a student from the graduate department defied two

of us to find any passage in the New Testament declaring the deity of Jesus, and after much searching he had us floored. A few weeks before graduating, one of our number, with the instinct of a census-taker, went the rounds to find how many of the graduating class believed in eternal damnation, and he could not find one among these thirty-seven men who were to be sent out as ministers from Yale Divinity School.

There was one other chance. Over and over again I had heard it asserted that the actual experience of life was the best cure for scepticism. I took a Baptist church. At the end of the third year of my ministry I knew there was something wrong, and many others knew it. A liberal brother from a neighboring town came to see me. He had said some radical things from his pulpit to which objections had been made. "Don't label your heresy," was my advice. "Do as I do: give them heresy in such a fashion that the very saints will not suspect it." Bad ethics, you say. I say very bad. But this is the only way in which hundreds of orthodox pulpits can be held. When it was whispered abroad that in my ministry of three years I had not preached a sermon on the blood of Jesus cleansing us from all sin, I saw clearly I had been fully discovered.

Once more it must be tried. In the larger city people are naturally more liberal. Alas! my hopes were dashed to pieces. I must give it all up. "Why do you not become a Unitarian?" said a colleague of mine,—we both were teaching in a small theological school in New York. "I am sick and tired of the whole business," I replied. "I neither want Unitarian nor Trinitarian systems," I continued. One day this good friend brought me word that a Unitarian minister

wanted to see me. I went to see him with glad heart. He was of a philosophical turn of mind, and he soon persuaded me that there was no such thing as a "Unitarian System." It was a shame for a man of my training to throw it all away or even to start anything along the individualistic line, when there were men and women of the same ideals as myself.

I left the Baptist fold without bitterness. I well remember the morning I went to Philadelphia to preach in Dr. Furness's church. I never knew until that morning the meaning of Bunyan's pilgrim dropping his pack at the cross. I was a free soul. I could preach that morning without mental reservations. I was now at liberty to build from the foundation. And many a time since, as I declare the living truth as it is experienced by a living soul,—truth whose ultimate test is my own reason,—when I think of by-gone days, they seem very far off and very unreal to me. But joy unspeakable has been mine in the ministry of the liberal gospel.

FROM TRINITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL TO UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL.

BY REV. THOMAS CLAYTON.

IT is not easy to describe just how or why one has come to make such a change in belief and church relations. It necessitates so much of the objectionable personal element. One cannot write such a story in the third person. Also some of the influences that carry us forward or change our direction are easily forgotten as the years roll by and new experiences crowd in upon the soul. However, I will do my best to recall the particular strokes of the paddle that gradually carried my canoe over from conservatism to liberalism in theology, and from the Trinitarian to the Unitarian stream.

Perhaps the change really began with the "Higher Criticism" which at first I distrusted, being a sincere believer in the plenary inspiration of the Bible. Hitherto, to me its statements had possessed divine authority. All my life I had studied the Bible, and mastered it as few do. The first book that impressed me was Dr. Gladden's "Who wrote the Bible?" It made me feel there was more I needed to know about the Bible. I bought other books, some more liberal, sought out review articles, and did much reading and reflection. I was soon convinced the Bible is not inerrant, that I must not and could not trust to it alone. I had also been reading along other lines. Astronomy was always one of my favorite sciences, archæology another. I had long refused to believe in man's late advent on the earth, or that all men had descended from Adam. I believed the days

of Genesis meant periods, and that the flood had been local. The story of the Fall to me had never been historical. I had regarded it as a kind of parable illustrating the origin of sin.

As the universe widened and deepened before growing power of the telescope, my idea of God expanded until he became too sublimely great for me to conceive of him as being incarnate and confined in the person of a Galilean peasant. Prayers to Jesus had always been improper, and tainted with idolatry; and my doubts regarding his equality with the Father gradually changed into certainty that such a doctrine was wrong.

Still it was hard for me to rid myself entirely of the old notion that such ideas were possibly a temptation of the devil, and revealed my own lack of religious experience. Did I not need more earnest prayer and consecration? I often tried to secure it on my knees until I was weary and my head swam. The long hours of mental wrestling that continued for years none but God and myself will ever know. But the work of transition went on. I was helped greatly by association with many able and scholarly ministers who were very liberal. Gradually I went beyond them, taking positions they seemed to consider very radical. The theory of evolution was forced upon my attention. Many of our friends accepted it, while I was prejudiced against it. Still I felt impelled to study it carefully, because I was unwilling to be ignorant of the reasons why other people believed differently from myself. This trait I have since come to be grateful for, because I have found so many people willing to deny and condemn things they know little or nothing about.

Reluctantly and unwillingly I retreated step by

step before the coming light. I feared to accept what I could not deny, until after reading John Fiske's little book, "The Destiny of Man," all my fears vanished, and I accepted in a measure the wonderful doctrine of evolution. Then arose the old difficulty about miracles, which would not be put down; but I was now fairly settled in my views as to the prerogatives of the human reason, which taught me that the laws of God as revealed in the universe have never wavered in the least from the beginning of creation. All along this painful path of intellectual transition I had been haunted by the fear that I might become a traitor to my life-long religious experience. It had clogged my steps and postponed many decisions. I had long possessed what Prof Hale has gone elsewhere in search of, and suffered from anxiety lest my radical tendencies should destroy it. But that fear has long since passed away. I know better now.

For some time I was anchored on the idea that the Gospels at least were authoritative, and could be relied upon to give us the real position of Jesus regarding the Deity. I well remember one night some twelve years ago spending several hours upon the discourses of Jesus, in which he is made to say much regarding his relation to the Father. The first reading confirmed my previous belief that Jesus did not claim for himself what modern Trinitarians claim for him, but to strengthen conviction I resolved to read it over again. Suddenly the thought came to me, supposing he is made to claim equality with God, would that decide it for me? Could I rely upon the verbal accuracy of these records, or even upon the memory of the original authors? What modification of these Gospels had there not been *before the im-*

perfect manuscripts we now have were written? The reply was decisive. I could not build so tremendous a doctrine upon so uncertain a foundation. Where, then, was the final authority? Must I trust reason alone? Then I felt as though my frail bark was adrift. I had neither certainty nor authority. Was there even a God? At this the bitter tears flowed; but my heart promptly answered: Yes, my God and Father who loves me, who has thus far guided and kept me, is still with me, and I shall yet see light in his light. "Though I walk through the valley of shadows, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." None of us need wonder that so many ministers and others draw back from so terrible an ordeal, and decide to neither read nor think lest they be driven to surrender the hopes and opportunities of a lifetime. As for me, it was necessary to go on even if it meant despair and death. To know the truth I was prepared for any kind of sacrifice. One of the books that seemed to help me much at this period was "The Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy," by John Fiske. To me he has always been what Charles Darwin wrote of him, "the clearest thinker I have ever read."

Gradually the darkness passed away. My crude ideas assumed more definite forms, and things began to look more natural and real. What had I left? My God was nearer and dearer, more real to me, than ever before. I saw him and felt his presence everywhere. His love quivered in the atmosphere and smiled upon me from heaven and earth. The Bible was still the most precious of books; for how wonderfully it described him, and gave the noble thoughts and experiences of men who, like myself, were seekers after God. Jesus to me remained the fairest of all

the sons of men, the dominating personality of my life and ministry. Humanity was even nearer than before, and every soul my kinsman in the family of God. Evolution and human history written upon rocks, in gravels, and upon tablets, revealed the working out of God's sublime plan for the glorification of mankind. I became satisfied, established, and, like John Henry Newman, can say, "I have not had a doubt or misgiving since, as to my convictions being the right ones."

Another great problem now faced me. What must I do? Remain in the Orthodox Church, and keep my convictions on many things to myself, as others I knew were doing? or, Wesleylike, strive to bring the church over to my point of view, or step out into an unfriendly and critical world? What can laymen know of the considerations that influence the actions of many sincere ministers? I have often heard the clergy severely criticised for continuing to act as though they believed in old dogmas generally considered to be dead.

To many it looks like stepping out to be crucified like the Master,—to be misunderstood and misrepresented, sometimes ostracized and forsaken of friends, to lose living and ministerial standing. What more natural than that friends, when consulted, should advise a man to act cautiously? I was advised to stay where I was and keep some of my opinions to myself, to gradually sow the seeds of liberalism, and wait until the time was ripe for more aggressive agitation. The denomination itself was liberal. There were no doctrinal tests, only testimony; but, while I can agree that others may stay where they are, I have felt it was best for me to give up the ministry or go to the Unitarians. For a time I could not

decide which to do; but sickness led me to resign my church, and then, assured of a welcome and a home among the Unitarians, I joined this body.

My reception has been kind; and, if former acquaintances grant me but faint recognition, they at least do not antagonize me, and many whom I never knew formerly heartily wish me Godspeed.

To sum up in a few words: I came over to the Unitarians to be honest with myself, to let the few who may be interested know just where I stand and why; to serve the cause of progressive truth in the spirit of the Master, who said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth."

FROM PRESBYTERIAN TO UNITARIAN.

BY REV. JOHN L. ROBINSON.

I WAS reared under the old regime of the Orthodox Church in Mississippi. During four consecutive summers, the revival season, I went to the mourners' bench and mourned in deep sincerity for my sins, which I knew were many and unmistakable.

Strange as it may seem, when I made my surrender to the will of God at one of these revival meetings as to my spiritual birth, I was born a Unitarian; and, perhaps, stranger still, I did not know it for fifteen years. For the past four years I had been praying to "the three in one and the one in three"; but at this crisis I had lost sight of all such confusions, and my thoughts were centred on God the Father, the Maker of all things, to whom I owed allegiance. To him was my surrender made, and neither Jesus nor the Holy Spirit were in the range of my mental or spiritual vision.

But of this experience I thought nothing at the time. It did not occur to me that there was anything unusual in it. I did not then know that there was such a word in the dictionary as Unitarian, and it was years afterward before I knew that there was a body of Christians who were called by that name.

Shortly after my conversion I joined the presbytery and began to prepare for the ministry. In a few years I was called upon to assist in a revival meeting, and did most of the preaching. I was not ambitious enough to preach what was called a "set sermon" on the Trinity; but once or twice during

this meeting, and a number of times afterward, I felt it my duty to show that the three persons had equal power, but there was only one God. But I never succeeded to my own satisfaction. Whenever I left the church and reflected upon the sermon, I felt as though I had either proved three Gods, which of course is an absurdity, or else I had simply juggled unconsciously with words.

After leaving the seminary and entering upon my first work, I took up the study anew as time and opportunity afforded, and sought what light I could from a careful study of the New Testament. The first thing that struck my attention was the genealogies in the first chapter of Matthew and the third chapter of Luke. Both accounts start out to give the genealogy of Jesus, and they give it through Joseph. Not a word is said about the genealogy of Mary.

All through the New Testament Mary and Joseph were referred to as the parents of Jesus. The word "parents" is referred to three times in Luke, third chapter. Mary twice in the same chapter speaks of Joseph as the father of Jesus. Not a word does she say about Joseph being the "reputed" father or "supposed" father of Jesus. Not a word do we find in the Old Testament about the doctrine of the "reputed" fathership of Jesus. In many places in the New Testament he is referred to as the son of Joseph. When I was studying these passages, I had the feeling all along that the doctrine of the reputed fathership of Jesus is unworthy the belief and promulgation of honest, educated men.

Another argument for the deity of Jesus was drawn from the statement that he was born of a virgin. There is not a Greek or Hebrew student who does not

know that the word translated "virgin" means "a young woman," whether married or unmarried.

I objected to the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus, not only because I believed it is against the plain facts of history,—the leader of nearly every religious belief is said to have been born of a virgin,—but because I believed it dishonored the holy institution of marriage. When children are born in holy wedlock, how can they be referred to as having been "conceived in sin," since nature's way of bringing children into the world is God's way of creating an immortal soul?

Furthermore, as the world has always been in the sorest need of just such strong and inspiring characters as Jesus was, it seemed to me that God is under obligation to continue the miraculous method, if that was the best method. I saw no reason why he should produce one and stop short of a hundred millions. Why not all? I next examined Jesus' own words. He said, "My Father is greater than I." This did not seem to me to be the language of a god. He said, "I can do nothing of myself; the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." This did not seem to me the language of a god. Jesus prayed. Did he pray to himself?

I was reminded of the fact that Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." Yes, I thought, and it is a noble truth. One in thought, one in purpose. Jesus also says, "And the glory which thou hast given unto me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one."

When I reached these conclusions, the chasm between me and my orthodox brethren was, I feared, too wide to be spanned.

The next question was, "What shall I do?" I

really wanted to remain in the church where I was, if I could do so honorably. I wrote to one of the leading ministers in the church, stated plainly my theological beliefs, told him I thought the best thing for me to do was to quietly leave the church, and asked his advice.

In his reply among other things he said, "Stay where you are." I was happy to get this letter. Thought the question was settled, and that I would stay where I was.

But this peace of mind was short-lived. I saw afterward that the rank and file of ministers and workers were of a different opinion, and that one of two things was open to me,—either to remain and bring upon myself a trial for heresy, which has never had any attractions for me, or else leave the church in a quiet way. I chose the latter.

The next question was, "Where shall I go?"

I knew in a general way the position of Unitarians, and my beliefs corresponded with theirs. But I thought of my old friends and relatives. From their standpoint, entering the Unitarian fellowship would be considered radical and anti-Christian.

I thought of entering the Congregational Church. I knew it had the reputation of being orthodox; but I also knew that it had a very liberal element in it, and that the liberal element were undisturbed whenever strong enough to maintain themselves. I thought I might be as liberal as I wanted to be, and yet would have the credit among my old friends of being orthodox. I knew from my own reading—especially from the testimony of Dr. Horace Bushnell that the word "Trinity" was used in all sorts of senses,—that it was a sort of catch-word or shibboleth. No matter in what sense you used it, you were considered

orthodox. Well, a man has but one life to live, and to the end of time it will be to me a source of deepest joy and satisfaction that I put aside all subterfuges. For better or for worse, for weal or woe, I was a Unitarian.

The truth from the Unitarian point of view is a source of never-failing joy to me. How glad I am to believe that, while all the peoples of the earth are searching after God in their feeble way, God is also seeking them, and Paul says he is not far from any one of them!

I was told, before entering the Unitarian fellowship, that Unitarians were very intellectual, but unspiritual; that they cared more for science, art, and literature than they did for religion. I have found them deeply spiritual. I have not seen a people more deeply interested in the great principles of righteousness, our kinship with God, the ultimate triumph of good over evil, and man's share in the responsibility of saving the world.

They do not pretend that they have reached the goal of perfection in practice or belief. Their motto is, "Onward and upward forever."

I believe truly that I have struggled upward into a larger truth, and I can say, as the Indians said when they threw their burdens down on the banks of a little stream in the south, "Alabama—here we rest."

FROM METHODIST TO UNITARIAN.

BY REV. VICTOR J. GILPIN.

My difficulties began during the first term of my college course. I had gone down to Victoria University to study theology after putting in two years at circuit work. Having been brought up in a Methodist parsonage library, I was well acquainted with Fletcher, Cooke, Wesley, Pope, and the other standards, and rather thought that a university life was simply a luxury. But I was not long in college before I felt that there was something in the universe that Pope's "Compendium of Theology" said nothing about. Random remarks caught my ear. I remember one that was made by a Senior at supper-table, to the effect that Huxley wasn't the fool that the preacher made out he was. Drummond's "Natural Law" sent me to the library shelves for more of his stuff, and I took down the "Ascent of Man" bound in a pleasant cloth. The evening shadows of a late day in October had closed round me when I wakened myself from a three hours' dream through that poem of evolution by a sudden nervous clap of the cover boards.

After that it was hard work to get down to Contra Conomen and the binomial. I had discovered a new path in the universe. My biology lectures were now entering upon cellular structure and comparative anatomy. Into these studies I plunged with enthusiasm, and before the end of the year I was some sort of an evolutionist, and had begun the work of reconciling Genesis and science. In my second year a course in geology established me in my new thought,

and I got the creation story snugly fitted into six geological periods. During the following years I read widely in science.

But my Bible study strangely perplexed me. I had no thought, as yet, that evolution was so significant as to the primary doctrines of the Church. But in a lecture one day on Thessalonians our professor remarked that Paul evidently was mistaken as to the time of the coming of Christ. I was thunderstruck and stared rigidly at the speaker, while my pencil dropped from my fingers. It is true, then, after all the denunciation of the preachers. Higher criticism wasn't the false, shallow thing that it was made out to be.

I can hear yet, after many years, the echo of that slamming book in the vacant library and that cedar pencil clattering to the floor.

The interest that I took in Old Testament and New Testament theology after that startling experience in the lecture-room stimulated me to a study of the philosophy of religion. I consequently left university with a changed theology. I understood now why the Jahwe of the 109th Psalm was not my God.

The really interesting time came when I began to preach a vital religion to my congregation. In my new cause-and-effect universe I could find no place for the Atonement nor the Everlasting Punishment as I once held them. I wandered here and there, searching for some constructive message; for I resolutely preached that there must be some natural connection between what a man did and what he experienced.

Thinking that the people were entitled to know what was going on in the theological world, I delivered a number of addresses on the Bible as literature,

explaining the stories of Genesis, the structure of Job, and the significance of Jonah. I undertook to re-interpret conversion, sin, and holiness; but my congregation was slow to follow. They began to be afraid of my new ideas. Special prayer was offered for me at a prayer-meeting, and I began to feel my peculiar position. One steward got up in a meeting and wanted to know whether I was sent there by Conference to preach King James's Bible or one of my own get up. An old lady refused to let me into her house when I called, and a young man who was dying left word that I was to have no part in his funeral service.

All of this saddened me and led me to feel that I was unwise in saying anything out of the way. Not being able to preach the old theology, I endeavored to put my new thought in a less striking way; but it was futile, and the upshot of it was my being closely examined at District Meeting as to my theological beliefs, and subsequently being stationed at the most distant mission of the Conference. But this proved a Godsend. I subscribed for a number of magazines and books, and read day and night. Up to this time I held the deity of Jesus as a sacred truth. Although not accepting the doctrine of Atonement in the exact words of the discipline, yet I regarded Jesus as a divine person, delegated for the salvation of men.

The *Outlook* came to my place at the time, and I read Lyman Abbott's articles on evolution, but was impressed with the weakness of the article that dealt with Jesus. I think that here occurred my first doubt regarding his deity. In the *Outlook* was an advertisement from Massachusetts, stating that Unitarian literature would be sent free to any applicant. I sent my name to this Massachusetts Alliance and a series of A. U. A. tracts came to me through the

post-office. None of them dealt with the question of the deity of Jesus, however; and, happening upon Mathewson's "Resurrection of Christ," I was bolstered up in my old faith for over a year. Some literature on the subject came at last, and I was shut up in close quarters with serious work on hand. That year *Encyclopædia Biblica* came, and I kept ravelling away. But, the more I grew in knowledge, the less was my preaching acceptable to my congregation. It was irksome to me to preach my universal religion in an ambiguous manner or dilute it with the old. Finally I became convinced of the untenability of orthodox teaching, and set to work to reconstruct matters. This was a difficult matter for me. I consulted with a Presbyterian minister who had developed as I had, and he said that nothing could be done. Another minister told me to preach the things that were common to the old and to the new. But about that time I came across Beecher's advice to young ministers not to preach any half gospel, but to swing the whole sword. Also, I was impressed with the effective sermons that Unitarian ministers were preaching, and one evening I lifted up a bunch of A. U. A. sermons and said to my Presbyterian friend, "There is gospel enough there to save the world."

Some of my ministerial friends said it was a crime to create an unrest among the people by talking about minor things such as the origin of the Bible; but I felt that there were no minor things, and that no truth was a negligible quantity.

I spent an afternoon with a Sunday-school superintendent whom I tried to bring to see that religion was life. We talked freely about the Old Testament and other problems, and I thought, by the way he

followed me, that a good afternoon's work had been done. But just before we parted he said, "Well, there are many things we cannot understand; but I suppose that, if we attend to the great thing, the salvation of the soul, God will not shut us out of heaven." I was sadly taken back, and through this and other like experiences I saw that there was little hope of accomplishing my work inside the church. New wine could not be put into old bottles.

On moving to a new circuit I resolved that I would try a different way and work along other lines. I would make no reference to Biblical questions nor to any discoveries of science. I would preach the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. So, after spending a number of weeks getting acquainted, I endeavored to infuse life into my prayer-meeting by taking up some subjects of vital interest, and preached a series of sermons on Religion and Life. Immediately the symptoms of unrest I knew so well began to appear. The people did not understand me. I was reminded that the old religion was good enough.

I was now fully convinced of the truth of Unitarian theology, but was doubtful about the Unitarian Church. An article in our church paper gave a very gloomy picture of Unitarianism in England, and a friend of mine who had visited New England for a summer declared it was a cold, intellectual affair, and my misgivings were increased. I succumbed to the temptation of living a quiet literary and social life in the Methodist Church, preaching in a mild and unoffensive way the simple truths that everybody believed. But a deep, hungering nature, which I inherited from my father, refused to be fed on this thin diet, and from this time on I never faltered. I was attracted by the quality of the Unitarian life as

presented in her classic churches, and quiet but thorough-going interest in modern problems. The unfettered freedom that belonged to the Unitarian minister was the thing I envied, though, more than anything else, and I resolved to have it. I sought a Unitarian minister, and his kindly interest and deep sympathy with a person in my position quite won me.

A little further correspondence on the matter ensued, and I one day, in the latter part of October started to pack up. The tragedy of those last few days will never be forgotten. Letters from home and entreaties from friends combined with the deep sorrow of our own hearts to turn the day into night. People with wondering faces came to call and asked us what was the matter. Were they not paying enough salary, or did we not like the place? A letter came from a distant minister declaring I must not leave, as it would not be long before the Methodist Church would be quite liberal. But, amidst packing boxes and general disorder, I sat down, wrote out my resignation to the chairman, finally informed my Board, and in the early soundless morning left the Methodist parsonage of Sheffield, and with it the Methodist Church. In that hour of dramatic silence, riding down the country road, with fields of mist shelving away to the south, I threw off the impossible load of traditional theology forever.

STEPS OF BELIEF

By James Freeman Clarke

Size, 5 x 7; pages, 311; price, 60 cents *net*; postage, 8 cents.

AN able advocate's successful defence of Rational Christianity against Atheism, Free Religion, and Romanism. In a vigorous, unprejudiced, and frank way the author emphasizes the cardinal doctrines of the Christian religion while at the same time undermining the positions upon which these three opponents of Rational Christianity take their stand.

ORTHODOXY: Its Truths and Errors

By James Freeman Clarke

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 1-2; pages, 512; price, 75 cents *net*; postage, 12 cents.

AFAIR, broad-minded presentation and examination of Orthodox doctrines from the Unitarian point of view. Although the writer's criticisms are acute, the spirit of the book is conciliatory, and the method reasonable and just. In a style clear and forcible is presented much wholesome theological truth.

ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS IN RELIGION

By James Freeman Clarke

Size, 4 1-4 x 6; pages, 148; price, cloth, 35 cents *net*; postage, 9 cents; price, paper, 25 cents *net*; postage, 4 cents.

THESE lectures are admirable presentations of the vital principles of Christian faith, containing many helpful suggestions, especially for those disturbed by the transition from the old to the new religious thought. The subjects are: I. Faith and Belief: Essential Belief concerning God. II. Christ and Christianity. III. The Bible. IV. The Church and Worship. V. Christian Experience. VI. The Future Life.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

A list of free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional and practical works, will be sent to all who apply.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals.

There are two forms of membership in this Association provided for those who desire to cooperate in the spread of liberal religious thought and influence:

I. *Life Membership*. Any individual may, by the payment of \$50, become a *Life Member* of the American Unitarian Association. Such a person is entitled to vote at all business meetings, to receive the Year Book and Annual Report, and, by means of frequent communications, is kept in touch with the various enterprises promoted by the Association.

II. *Associate Membership*. Other individuals desiring to affiliate with the Association may become *Associate Members* by signing an application card (sent upon request) and the payment of \$1.00. As such they will receive a certificate of *Associate Membership*, also *Unitarian Word and Work* (the monthly magazine reporting denominational news), each new pamphlet as it is issued, and occasional other communications from Headquarters.

Address communications and contributions to the

American Unitarian Association
25 BEACON STREET BOSTON, MASS.

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— B 1 2 1917

A LITTLE CATECHISM

OF UNITARIAN FAITH, FELLOWSHIP, AND
ORGANIZATION, IN TWENTY-THREE
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

7 1 3 1917

A LITTLE CATECHISM

OF UNITARIAN FAITH, FELLOWSHIP, AND
ORGANIZATION, IN TWENTY-THREE
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

1. WHAT IS THE FAITH OF OUR UNITARIAN CHURCHES?

Our churches affirm the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

2. WHAT ARE THE ARTICLES OF OUR FAITH?

The Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, the Spirit of Jesus, Salvation by Service, the Progress of Mankind onward and upward forever.

3. HAVE WE A CREED, THEN?

We have great beliefs; but nothing in our beliefs is to be construed as an authoritative test. We cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and practical aims.

4. WHAT MAKES US "LIBERALS" IN RELIGION?

To hold four principles supreme:—

- (1) Freedom of Reason and Conscience our Method in religion,—instead of authority and tradition;
- (2) Fellowship our Spirit in religion,—instead of sectarianism;

- (3) Service our Aim in religion,—instead of salvation for self;
 (4) Character our Test in religion,—instead of ritual or creed.

5. ARE ALL LIBERALS "UNITARIAN" IN THEIR BELIEF?

By no means. Whoever holds those four things supreme is a Liberal, whatever his denominational name. Whoever holds them supreme, he and we are essentially one in the spirit. Beliefs, being of the mind, must needs differ, and therefore names and organizations; but on these four Principles, as on corner-stones, slowly uprises the Church Universal, the One Holy Catholic Church.

6. WHAT IS THE "AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION"?

It is the executive and missionary arm of the Unitarian Fellowship. It was organized in 1825, "to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity."

7. WHAT DOES IT DO?

It supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, publishes books, tracts, and devotional works, and sends out sowers to sow new fields of the Liberal Faith.

8. WHAT IS THE "UNITARIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY"?

It is the Society which ministers to the needs of the Sunday-schools of our Fellowship, by printing manuals, services, and a fortnightly paper.

9. WHAT IS THE "NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF UNITARIAN WOMEN"?

It is the organization of the Women of our Fellowship. It works in many ways to quicken the life of the churches. Each church that will has its local branch.

10. WHAT IS THE "YOUNG PEOPLE'S RELIGIOUS UNION"?

It is the organization of the Young People of our Fellowship. "Truth, Worship, Service," is its motto. Each church that will has its branch.

11. WHAT IS OUR "GENERAL CONFERENCE"?

It is an advisory Conference, in which delegates from our churches take counsel together to promote life and co-operation in our Unitarian Fellowship. It was formed in 1865 and meets once in two years.

12. WHAT ARE OUR "STATE" AND "LOCAL CONFERENCES"?

Smaller associations of the churches for purposes of conference and missionary effort.

13. WHAT IS THE "POST-OFFICE MISSION"?

It is preaching by mail to isolated inquirers, who ask concerning the Unitarian Faith. Any church that will takes part in the work, answering the letters and sending the tracts.

14. WHAT OTHER DENOMINATIONAL ACTIVITIES ARE THERE?

Benevolent Societies of many kinds, Ministerial Unions, Laymen's Clubs, Academies for the young, Theological Schools.

15. WHERE DO OUR NATIONAL SOCIETIES HAVE THEIR HOME?

In Boston, Mass., at 25 Beacon Street, close by the State House. It is a beautiful stone building, presented to the American Unitarian Association by the laymen of Boston. There are local offices in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco.

16. WHAT IS THE "INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL"?

A Council of Liberal Religious thinkers and workers of many lands,—the United States, Great Britain, France, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Hungary, and the East,—fifteen nationalities, twenty-four religious fellowships. It was organized in Boston, in 1900, and meets once in two years. It met in London in 1901; in Amsterdam, 1903; in Geneva, 1905; in Boston, 1907.

17. WHAT UNITARIAN PAPERS ARE THERE?

The "Christian Register" published in Boston since 1821 is the weekly paper. The "Unitarian Advance" in New York, and the "Pacific Unitarian" in San Francisco, are monthlies, and there are many local and parish papers. Every Unitarian family that can afford to should take one of these papers, for the home's own sake and for the sake of the Unitarian cause.

18. HOW MANY UNITARIAN CHURCHES ARE THERE?

About one thousand in all that bear the name,—four hundred and ninety or more in the United States, four hundred in the British Empire, a hundred and twenty-five in Transylvania. This last group dates from the Reformation time; the English group from about 1700; the American from about 1800. Most

of our own group are in New England, many of them being the original "First" churches of the Puritan Forefathers.

19. ARE THERE UNITARIANS OUTSIDE OF UNITARIAN CHURCHES?

Many. Several religious bodies, Unitarian in thought and in spirit, do not carry the name. There is no reason why they should, having grown on a different historic root. Our Universalist neighbors, the Hicksite Friends, the Liberal Protestants in Holland, France, and Switzerland, the Protestanten Verein of Germany, the Reformed Jews, the Brahmo Somaj of India, and in these latter days very many in the Liberal Orthodox churches, as well as many thinkers outside of all churches, are in close sympathy with us.

20. DOES THE UNITARIAN DENOMINATION GROW RAPIDLY IN NUMBERS?

No; and it is hard to see how it can, if thoroughly true to its principles, for Freedom of Reason and Conscience tends to keep one in the thin front line of thought. Let us not regret that Unitarianism is less a loaf than a leaven. As leaven, it has helped not a little this last hundred years to lighten and sweeten the whole big loaf. It is not an establishment: it is a movement, and part of a movement vastly larger than itself. Its concern should be, not numbers, but to interpret rightly that movement, and to be actively true to its function of spiritual influence. Each individual Unitarian in his place of life is responsible for a share of that influence.

21. HAVE THERE BEEN ANY UNITARIANS OF DISTINCTION?

Because of that New England and Puritan blood in many of our churches, not a few of the shining figures in American literature, education, philanthropy, and reform, were born in our faith; while others have come to share it. Its four master-teachers in the last century were men of the highest distinction in things of the spirit,—William Ellery Channing, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Theodore Parker in our own country, and James Martineau of England.

22. WHERE CAN ONE WHO WISHES TO KNOW MORE ABOUT UNITARIANISM AS A FAITH AND A MOVEMENT EASILY FIND WHAT HE WANTS?

In a short statement called "The Unitarian Church, its History and Characteristics," by Joseph Henry Crooker, which the American Unitarian Association (25 Beacon Street, Boston) sends free on request. It also prints many other like statements for free distribution.

23. WHY SHOULD WE SEEK TO PLANT MORE CHURCHES TO SPREAD THE UNITARIAN GOSPEL?

In order to open more centres of spiritual influence;
To make souls know themselves as children of God;
To help make truth and righteousness the foundation of the nations;

To do our part in establishing the Kingdom of God on the earth.

[No. 225]

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1912

THE HIGHEST CRITICISM

BY REV. WILLIAM H. LYON, D.D.

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

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JUN 12 1917

THE HIGHEST CRITICISM.

"Did not our heart burn within us as he opened to us the Scriptures?"—LUKE xxv. 32.

A QUARTER of a century has passed since the Revised Version of the New Testament was issued. The curiosity of the public was intense. Millions of copies were sold, and an American newspaper had the whole translation telegraphed by cable and issued it as an extra. Probably since the earlier years of the Reformation there have not been so many readers of the Bible as there were in 1881.

But, if good people expected as a result of this eager study a marked increase in piety or righteousness, they soon found themselves mistaken. When the public understood that there was no very important change made from the old version, that no great damage and no great good was to be done to the popular theology, they left their Bibles to gather dust again, or to repose, elegantly bound, upon the centre-table in their parlors. Possibly there was a little less superstition about the Scriptures among those to whom the translation was the Bible, and who found that it was not quite perfect; and perhaps some scholarly people discovered that their fresh reading raised some questions that had gone to sleep with the book itself, and began to follow these questions out to their answers. Here and there the translation of certain texts gave a new and higher meaning to them than

the old version had given, and led to new sermons upon them. But, on the whole, the attention roused by the new translation soon slept again. There were too many sensations then, as there are now, to give mere literary curiosity any long life, and some new cause of excitement soon replaced this in the common mind.

In the last few years the Bible has again attracted the attention of the reading world. A striking and somewhat pretentious phrase, "The Higher Criticism," has caught its eye, and fixed it once more upon the ancient book. The word *Criticism* seemed to the general mind a word of hostility, of attack, and that human impulse which makes the multitude run wherever there is news of a fight drove them to the books and the reviews, the lectures and the sermons, that promised to tell them what was going on in the theological arena. It has been hard to explain to them that criticism is a neutral word, that it means simply impartial judgment, like that of scales and yard-sticks, that its object is simply to find out the facts and to brush away ancient and modern prejudice. The popular speech uses the word *criticise* in the sense of to *condemn*, and what was expected by many readers was to see the Bible disproved and discredited, its pretensions unveiled, and its tyranny over human nature forever thrown off. The popular sympathy is generally very largely on the side of the heretics. It has an uneasy suspicion that the theologians and the ministers are taking advantage of its ignorance, and it is apt to welcome any bold come-outer that promises to let them in behind the scenes.

The first of the higher critics were heretics, and they were roundly rebuked by the regulars. But

to-day they are the regulars themselves. Things that even Theodore Parker would not have said are written freely and frankly by those who once raged against him. It is not from Harvard Divinity School alone that the new knowledge of the circumstances under which the Bible was written is proclaimed, but also from Yale and Oxford. The leading expounders of the latest view of the Scriptures are Congregationalists and Episcopalians, and those of us who are fortunate enough to have the modifying and refining influence of members of those orthodox bodies among our hearers may be pardoned a little amusement when we find them disturbed by novel views which their own leaders have taught us. In fact, places have sometimes changed, and there are so-called Liberals who are shocked and antagonized by the rash extremes to which some so-called Conservatives are rushing. How the latter can reconcile their views with the statements of faith which they are supposed to endorse is a mystery to those who look on from the outside, but, on the other hand, no one can fail to respect the courage and frankness with which they have taken up the truth. It certainly is better, since these things must be said, that they should be said by men of reverence and restraint, not only by sensational writers and by lecturers whose chief aim is to amuse the mob.

Now one consequence of all this agitation is to revive again the interest in the Bible. Like the announcement of the revision, the rumor of the rearrangement of the Bible has called back the wandering mind of the public to that neglected book. It is a deeper and a healthier attention, and it will last longer. For what attracts it is not a finished fact,

like the revision, to be judged all at once, but a process that began many years ago and will last many years yet. And it will grow in interest as it goes on, since it will come to questions of greater importance than any it has already settled. It will hold the respect of thoughtful people, too, because what it has done already has been so universally accepted by scholars of all communions. The rearrangement of the Old Testament is regarded by practically all learned men in that line of study as forever settled, whatever ministers, for whatever reason, may continue to say to their hearers. So, while good men shrink a little, as at the thought of a necessary operation upon some loved member of their family, before the fearless yet reverent advance of the new learning upon the New Testament, the common feeling is that which ought to be held toward surgeons who have proved their skill and trustworthiness in previous operations. The truth is hard to hear, sometimes, but it is the only thing that in the long run it pays to hear.

But this interest, like the other, will die out at last, with very much the same results. It is a literary curiosity, not religious, and will soon be satisfied, or find some new subject to run after. As before, the superstitious use of the Bible will receive a shock, and will change in many cases to unbelief and neglect. In general, the unintelligent and indiscriminating reader, who has been accustomed to think that the Scriptures need no understanding in the reading, that one chapter is as good as another so long as it is in the Bible, will find his interest much less. It is possible, too, that some really pious people, who have rested their faith in the great religious verities upon the infallible text of

the sacred book, will be greatly disturbed and even unsettled by finding that all is not as they thought it was.

It is the last class alone that needs to be considered, the truly earnest and religious, and to them it should be said that there is a kind of criticism of the Bible that is much higher than either the translation or the sifting of the various books. There is a point of view from which the question of who wrote its books or when they were written vanishes entirely. The value of any passage for its best purpose never depended upon these things, and is not affected by the opinion of learned men upon them. Religion is not a matter of time or place. The question of right and wrong is not to be settled by mere scholars. The Bible is a record of spiritual experience, and, if the experience is real, it speaks to the soul that is ready for it, no matter how many centuries or thousands of miles lie between. There is a higher criticism than that which is so called. Let us name it the Highest Criticism, and let us note that it has always been in the world, is not in the least injured by anything that scholars have done, and may be exercised by any one who has a soul, whatever learning he has or has not.

The Highest Criticism, what is it? It is the recognition of life by life. It is the answer of soul to soul. It is the echo of experience in experience. Take the Twenty-third Psalm, for instance. We are told now that David did not write it. At first this seems to take the value out of it. We had always thought of David, the shepherd lad, writing among his sheep, in the green pastures and by the still waters, with his rod and his staff by his side, or as leading his flock through some dark ravine that seemed like the valley of the

shadow of death. To be told that the psalm is later than he lived, and that it was composed by some unknown singer, seems to drain the sweetness from it. The case is not helped by looking up David's record, and finding that he was really not a very spiritually-minded man, and that, perhaps, it is just as well that he did not write the beloved psalm. It remains anonymous. It has no historical or personal association. It floats down the centuries like a sweet odor from an unseen flower or a strain of music from an instrument invisible and unknown.

But is the odor any less sweet or the music any less refreshing because we do not know whence it comes? Or would it be any sweeter if we could find the flower or trace the notes back to the instrument? We should have an addition to our stock of knowledge. Our curiosity would be satisfied. Our inborn and inextinguishable desire for facts would be pleased. But this is a different part of our nature, and perhaps a lower one than the love of odors and of music. Less valuable, too, for we should be poorer to find the instrument and never hear the music than to hear the music and never know whence it came.

So there is a power in us to appreciate spiritual beauty or moral truth which is quite distinct from either the love of persons or the ability to reason. It is the power of experience, or of the refinement which experience has produced, to recognize that which is like itself or that which it needs to make it better. I knew a most loving couple who had come to that supreme moment when death was gliding between them. The husband's life was ebbing out fast, and there were but a few moments of communion left to them. The temporal affairs were settled, and then husband and

wife joined hands and repeated this Twenty-third Psalm. It was very soothing and consoling, the wife told me; but why was it so? Was it because David wrote it? Would it have been any less so if some one had stepped in to say that he had found that nobody knew who wrote it? As well might one say that the sweetness of the rose depended upon its name, or the beauty of a symphony upon our knowing who composed it. These would be interesting facts, but they lie upon an entirely different and lower level than that of the appreciation of the thing itself. The sweetness of the rose depends upon its power to be sweet and upon the power of the passer-by to perceive it. The beauty of the symphony depends upon the music in the soul of the composer and the music in the soul of the hearer. It would be interesting to know the biography of the composer and the history of the writing of the symphony. It would be very satisfying to be able to analyze the whole production, to watch the working out of the themes, and to learn the general theory of symphonic composition. But a man might know all these pleasant things and yet never enter into the spirit of the music. The programme tells many good people all about the symphony, and we see some of them reading the programme instead of listening to the music. This higher criticism is very interesting to them, and, if one may judge by the expression or lack of expression on their faces, that is as far as they can go. The music in them does not rise to greet the music that comes to them. The higher criticism they have. The highest criticism they have not, and they cannot have it till their musical appreciation has risen nearer to the level of the composer.

To many a husband and wife it may well be im-

possible for the spiritual experience of that unknown poet who wrote the Twenty-third Psalm to appeal. They have no experience of their own, no such ability of soul to answer to soul as gave the real consolation of that solemn time. They might repeat the lines as a sort of sacrament, incantation, mysterious charm against the power of death,—a not uncommon way of repeating Scripture,—but of real comfort, of stay to a sinking heart, of antidote to the dread of the unknown, there could be none. That Highest Criticism which is the power to appreciate and answer to spiritual beauty and power would not be in them.

Or let us move on to the New Testament. The Higher Criticism is at work here, and the results are likely to be very startling. It is unpleasant to be assured that Matthew did not write the First Gospel nor John the Fourth. It is disturbing to have some of the main facts in the story of Jesus brought into doubt. The historic foundations of Christianity are likely to be seriously shaken. Those who have built their faith upon events and persons may be troubled by the results of what is called the Higher Criticism.

But not those who are capable of that Highest Criticism which is the answer of spiritual experience to the spiritual appeal of Jesus. He says, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Now there are thousands of persons who believe that Jesus said these words, but do not believe in the words. Faith in Christ is very easy so long as it means believing about him, but when it comes to believing in him as we do in a wise friend, or a friend in whose character we have confidence, they are not to be found. They do

not love their enemies, and they by no means pray for those that use them badly. There are multitudes of this kind of Christians, whose souls do not answer to the appeal of the Christian life. The biography of Christ they believe in with their minds, and this belief gives them a sense of security here and for the hereafter. But the life of Christ which alone gives the biography of Christ any value does not come home to them as a reality.

Such people are likely to be seriously disturbed by the results of the Higher Criticism, because its field of work is exactly their field of belief. But the man who believes in the life of Christ as a spiritual condition, and not merely as a series of events, will not be troubled by scholarly investigations. There is that in his heart that answers to the teachings of his Master and to that illustration of them which he gave on the cross. His is the power of the Highest Criticism, which deals not with the things of time, but with the things of eternity. It may or may not be possible for him to carry out the Christian ideal among the circumstances and practices of to-day, but he realizes that it is the ideal toward which human life must climb, and he recognizes his Master in the beauty and the power of whoever lifted it before him. The claim of Jesus to the loyalty of the world will lie less and less in his miracles as the world grows more and more able to appreciate him, and to those who can appreciate him the authorship of the Gospels will be no more essential than that of "Hamlet."

Let us take two illustrations more of this Highest Criticism. Toward the end of the Book of Deuteronomy is a chapter that contains what is styled the Blessing of Moses. He calls the twelve tribes of Israel

before him one by one, and gives them his benediction. It is a chapter which is very interesting to the archæologist. The higher critic reads it eagerly for its information on the history of Israel. But to the ordinary reader it is very uninteresting. The tribes of Israel are gone, and some of their history can well be spared. The Thummin and Urim of Levi and the leap of Dan from Bashan do not seem to concern us. But suddenly the reader comes upon a sentence that makes his heart leap,—“The eternal God is thy dwelling-place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” That sentence is like a chink through time into eternity, through human history into the divine love and peace. The wise reader takes it away from its dull context. He does not care whether Moses said it or not. He leaves the scholars to settle the question. But that thought of God as our home and our hiding-place in time of trouble belongs to him. He sets it in his funeral service, and keeps it for all the other hard and trying times of his life.

Here is an instance of the use of the Bible which the Higher Criticism cannot affect. It illustrates the use which the Bible will more and more serve as men grow more spiritual. We have this treasure in earthen vessels, and it will stay with us when the vessels in which it was saved for us have been broken and thrown away. In older days, readers hung with wonder upon stories of miracle, or traced the story of their favorite heroes through strange adventures. So the child still does. Every Sunday-school teacher knows how much easier it is to interest his class in the Old Testament than in the New, in story than in precept. But, when men and women come to know life, when their spiritual needs develop and their spiritual senses have been

sharpened by the ripening of the soul, it is the springs of life by which they stop and drink.

Here are the Epistles to the Corinthians. How much in them is of time, belongs to conditions that are past! What have we to do with meats offered to idols, with discerning of spirits and interpretation of tongues? But suddenly, as when a stony road becomes soft and smooth, and winds among trees and meadows, we find ourselves reading, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." The great councils that formulated the creeds did not care for this, nor did our fathers when they were busy quarrying out doctrines from the Book which was to them all alike divine. There is nothing here that gives the higher critic a clew to author or date, to age or circumstances. This is the spiritual life that knows no time or surrounding, but is eternal in its truth. It requires no proof, no "evidences of Christianity." It is of God and for man.

The Higher Criticism, then, deals with persons and dates,—the mere instruments and shells of the divine revelation. The Highest Criticism deals with the revelation itself, the divine truth and life that shine through times and circumstances, and that lie, in books as in the world, among dull details and unessential conditions, as the diamond lies in the clay. The real question is not Who wrote it? but What does it say to me? In that beautiful story of the walk to Emmaus the disciples reproached themselves with having failed to notice, not whether the stranger who had spoken to them was a man in authority, but that their heart burned within them as he talked with them by the way and opened to them the Scriptures.

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THE HISTORY OF UNITARIANISM IN THE SOUTHERN CHURCHES

CHARLESTON, NEW ORLEANS
LOUISVILLE, RICHMOND

BY

REV. ARTHUR A. BROOKS

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
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“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

APR 12 1917

THE HISTORY OF UNITARIANISM IN THE
SOUTHERN CHURCHES: CHARLESTON,
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISVILLE, RICHMOND.

CHARLESTON.

THE Unitarian church in Charleston, S.C., while dating as a separate organization from the year 1817, took its root much further back than that, in the liberal nature of the people of the Independent Presbyterian or Congregational Church, which had existed for more than a century. In this church the ministers were chosen indiscriminately from Congregational and Presbyterian sources. We may judge of the liberal attitude of this church by its official action from time to time. As an example, take the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted in 1775: "This church has never in formal manner adopted any name, platform, or constitution, but suffered itself to be called Congregational, Presbyterian, or Independent,—sometimes by one of these names, sometimes by two of them, sometimes by all three." "The main thing this church has had in view since 1732 was not so much to define exactly the mode of their discipline . . . as to be upon a *broad dissenting bottom*, and leave themselves as free as possible from all foreign shackles, that no moderate person of either denomination might be afraid to join them. The constitution of this church is to have no absolute invariable form, but to act upon the freest and most liberal principles."

In such an atmosphere of liberal polity and principle this church grew and prospered till in 1772 it was decided to erect a second building to accommodate its many worshippers. With the Revolution, however, came troublous times, so that the second edifice was not completed till 1787; but after the restoration of peace this double church worshipped in its two buildings under colleague pastors for many years.

In 1815 the death of Rev. William Hollinshead, after a ministry of a quarter of a century, brought on events which led to a formal division of the double church. Rev. Anthony Forster was chosen to succeed him as co-pastor with Rev. B. M. Palmer. For a year previous he had served as temporary supply during Dr. Hollinshead's illness and absence; and during that year a spiritual experience had come to him such as has happened to many another seeker after doctrinal truth,—an experience which led him, when it became necessary for him formally to be inducted into office and to subscribe to the Westminster Confession, to hesitate and finally to refuse. Mr. Forster had married a daughter of Mr. Joseph Gales, of Raleigh, N.C., and Mrs. Gales was daughter of Dr. Priestley, the English Unitarian and scientific scholar. Mr. Forster felt it incumbent upon him to rescue his father-in-law, Mr. Gales, for whom he had the highest personal esteem, from what he regarded as dangerous heresy. He therefore began to read Unitarian books, especially those of Dr. Priestley, with the result that misgivings about Calvinism rose in his mind, and that the candor and single-hearted love of truth exhibited by these Unitarian writers finally so prevailed upon him that the would-be converter

was himself converted. He declined thereupon to accept a pastorate that did not rest simply on the principles of the Gospels. This decision brought on a crisis in the affairs of the church, for it became evident that either he or the rule of subscription to the Westminster Confession must go. In the meantime, during the period of his gradually changing views, Mr. Forster had carefully avoided all controversial themes, and, confining himself to ethical and spiritual teaching, had effectively established himself in the approval and love of a large part of his congregation. After much discussion and various propositions for settling the difficulty, the result was a final separation of the Calvinistic from the liberal element among the people, the latter, numbering seventy-five subscribers, taking the church building in Archdale Street, relinquishing their share in the funds of the original corporation, and assuming \$10,000 of the church debt. Their charter, issued Dec. 13, 1817, to continue in force twenty-one years, describes them as "the Second Independent or Congregational Church of Charleston." Not yet were they ready to take the name "Unitarian."

The theological change thus brought about was not wholly the result of local causes, but partly a manifestation of the spirit of the time. In the quickened intellectual atmosphere following the Revolution, the whole Congregational Church of America found itself developing and gradually dividing into the Orthodox and the Unitarians.

Mr. Forster's health shortly failed, and he was obliged to close his pastorate in 1819. The society sought a new minister, and found him, at the recommendation of President Kirkland of Harvard Uni-

versity, in Rev. Samuel Gilman, then a tutor at his Alma Mater. With his wife, who was Miss Caroline Howard, of Boston, and who had already won some literary reputation, he took up his residence in Charleston in the autumn of 1819, and was ordained to the ministry on December 1 by Rev. Joseph Tuckerman, afterward distinguished for his ministry to the poor in Boston, Rev. Jared Sparks, the noted biographer, afterward President of Harvard University, and Rev. Mr. Parks, a neighboring Presbyterian minister.

Mr. Gilman had a long and prosperous pastorate of nearly forty years. At first there were naturally enough some defections of individuals who either had felt a special personal regard for Mr. Forster or were dissatisfied with the views of his successor or could not endure the odium of a new and unpopular name; but after a time Mr. Gilman's character and culture made his influence felt, and he took and held an honored place among the clergy, while his church on account of the wealth and intelligence of its members held an influential position in the community. During his ministry the church debt was paid off, partly by subscriptions, partly by the sale of land, and partly by a legacy from Colonel Thomas Roper, a distinguished and public-spirited Unitarian, who also left to the city the Roper Fund. In 1839 the original charter, which had been issued in 1817, constituting Daniel C. Webb, Hugh Patterson, and others a body corporate under the name of the Second Independent or Congregational Church in Charleston having expired, the church was rechartered as "The Unitarian Church in Charleston."

In 1818 a set of rules for members was adopted, of which the first two were these:—

“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we, the communing members of the Second Independent or Congregational Church in Charleston, solemnly asserting for ourselves and as fully allowing to all others the right of private judgment and freedom of opinion in all things pertaining to the conscience, do, with a view of securing the regular and orderly administration of our ecclesiastical affairs, agree to the following rules and regulations:—

“Article First. We receive the written word of God, contained in the scripture of the Old and New Testaments, as our only rule of faith and practice.

“Article Second. We admit to a participation of our common privileges all who acknowledge the divine authority of the religion of Jesus Christ as preserved in the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, and whose lives exhibit evidence of their sincerity and uprightness.”

In 1820 an association was formed called “The Charleston Unitarian Book and Tract Society,” with the following names as managers: Hugh Patterson, President; Samuel Gilman, Secretary; Thomas Lee, Daniel Perkins, James Smith, Daniel Stevens, Daniel C. Webb, Joshua B. Whitridge, Jeremiah A. Yates. This is the oldest organization among Unitarian churches to engage in Post-office Mission work.

In 1853 Dr. Gilman’s health being broken, he was relieved by an assistant pastor, Rev. C. M. Taggart, who after a brilliant but brief ministry died in 1854. During the two years from April, 1852, to April, 1854, the church edifice was entirely and beautifully remodelled at an expense of \$35,000, largely defrayed by the generous premiums paid at the sale of the pews. Dr. Gilman died in 1858, and after his death the min-

istry of the church was somewhat broken, the pulpit being occupied by Rev. James McFarland, Rev. George G. Ingersoll, and probably others. Details of these years are lacking, inasmuch as at the outbreak of the Civil War the records, library, organ, communion service, and church furnishings were removed to Columbia for safety, and were afterward all burned with that city. During the greater part of the dark period of the war the church was closed and services discontinued.

In April, 1865, the church itself having been but little injured and the congregation returning to the city, steps were taken to resume services, and Rev. Calvin Stebbins from the Harvard Divinity School was selected as minister. Such was the disturbed condition of affairs, however, that it was agreed that a little time must be allowed for sectional differences to subside, and Mr. Stebbins withdrew.

Through the aid of John Gibbon, Esq., a member of the congregation then residing in Paris, and of Rev. James Martineau, an Englishman was then secured for the pulpit,—Rev. Thomas Hirst Smith. Settled in November, 1866, and remaining till February, 1868, Mr. Smith did a valuable work. He was succeeded in December, 1868, by Rev. Rufus P. Cutler, of Brooklyn, N.Y., who served with acceptance for six years, till, his health failing, he was obliged to withdraw. Rev. James Boyd, an Englishman, served as minister for a year, and Rev. Henry F. Jenks, of Boston, for two years, from 1873 to 1875.

In January, 1876, Rev. E. C. L. Browne became pastor, and remained thirteen years. During this period the church suffered from the loss by death of many of its oldest and most influential members.

In August, 1885, a destructive cyclone greatly damaged the edifice, but a still greater calamity befell in the earthquake of the following year, when the beautiful structure was almost totally wrecked. A generous outpouring of money, however, from the entire body of Unitarian churches enabled the society to restore their edifice after the original design, and to render it perhaps more beautiful than ever.

In October, 1889, Rev. H. A. Whitman became pastor. In 1893 a parish house was erected near the church at a cost of about \$10,000, the gift of Mr. Alva Gage, who also upon his decease left a considerable fund for the endowment of the society. Mr. Whitman was succeeded in 1901 by the present minister, Rev. C. M. Gray.

Many of the honored names of Charleston have had place as members of the Unitarian church; but unfortunately complete lists cannot be given, as the records previous to the war are all lost. At the meetings of the corporation in 1865-66 the following names appear:—

Dr. James Moultrie.

Joseph Walker.

C. W. Logan.

N. M. Porter.

Thaddeus Street.

H. S. Griggs.

S. W. Fisher.

S. S. Mills.

W. L. Webb.

James M. Bee.

Dr. S. Logan.

J. H. Colburn.

C. M. Innes.

John Webb.

G. E. Gibbon.

Dr. A. G. Mackey.

Z. B. Oakes.

Wilson Glover.

O. Wilkie.

J. W. Gray.

James Chapman.

Robert Chapman.

A. G. Rose.

Dr. A. B. Rose.

Henry S. Tew.

J. R. Wiltberger.

William McComb.

A. F. Black.

D. Barrow.

G. A. Locke.

F. L. Porcher.
 L. M. Jones.
 A. H. Jones.
 W. H. Jones.
 W. E. Howland.
 B. M. Strobel.
 M. D. Strobel.
 T. A. P. Horton.
 G. D. Connor.

William Shepherd.
 J. W. Harrison.
 T. D. Eason.
 J. M. Eason.
 Charles H. West.
 William Thompson.
 Charles Love.
 H. H. Williams.

On the walls of the church and in the cemetery are tablets and monuments in memory of the following:—

- 1777. Rev. William Tennent, A.M.
- 1824. Mrs. Martha Savage.
- 1818. Miss Elizabeth Savage.
- 1855. Miss Sarah Savage.
- 1828-1831. 'Samuel and Hannah Smith.
- 1820. Rev. Anthony Forster.
- 1858. Rev. Samuel Gilman, D.D.
- 1854. Rev. Charles Manson Taggart.
- 1859. Rev. James R. McFarland.
- 1813. Rev. Isaac Stockton Keith.
- 1893. Rev. E. C. L. Browne.

NEW ORLEANS.

The Unitarian church in New Orleans, La., dates back to about the year 1817, although it was not then known as a Unitarian church. It was the second Protestant church to be established in the city, and its edifice was first opened for public worship July 4, 1819. It was originally of the Presbyterian denomination, and its minister was Rev. Sylvester Larned, who after a short and brilliant pastorate died, a victim of yellow fever, in 1820 at the early age of twenty-three.

His successor was Rev. Theodore Clapp, a young

clergyman from Massachusetts, who had studied at Yale and Andover, and who preached his first sermon on the last Sunday in February, 1822. For nearly thirty-five years he continued his ministry there, and surrendered his charge only when compelled by failing health. Mr. Clapp was a man of great vigor; and in the pulpit and out of it, in winter and in summer, his labors were untiring. Every few years during his long ministry the city was visited by epidemics of yellow fever, and twice at least was smitten by cholera of a virulent kind. In the midst of sickness and death and the poverty which ensued always was to be seen the familiar form of "Parson" Clapp, ministering both to the bodily and to the spiritual needs of all within his reach, whether they were of his own parish or not. Being a man of sympathetic nature, he was often led, in spite of his physical strength, to overtask himself in these charitable labors. Notwithstanding this he succeeded in doing such good work in the pulpit that he earned for himself the reputation of one of the greatest preachers of the day. It is remarkable, too, that in the midst of all his labors he found time to formulate a new belief quite different from that in which he had been brought up. At length abandoning the Presbyterian form of faith and proclaiming his new convictions, he drew along with him most of his congregation, so that the church edifice was retained and became known as the First Congregational Church. The charter of this church is dated 1833.

This new doctrinal position Mr. Clapp arrived at not by the study of books nor by intercourse with liberal thinkers in the North, but solely through his close study of the life of Jesus Christ as told in the

New Testament and through his philanthropic labors among the poor and suffering in his own city. On the first Sunday of July, 1834, he tells us in his autobiography, he proclaimed from the pulpit for the first time his firm conviction that the Bible does not teach the doctrine of eternal punishment, and announced that he could no longer teach the tenets of the Presbyterian Church nor conform to its polity. This, he says, was the happiest day he had ever experienced, since now he was in a position to vindicate the ways of God to man. "It was in the Crescent City," he writes further, "not in my native place, not in New Haven, Boston, or Andover, but in New Orleans, where I learned to take shelter from all the ills with which earth can assail us under the brooding wings of Ineffable Goodness."

Personally, Mr. Clapp was a man of large stature and imposing presence, and outside the pulpit of a genial manner that won the hearts of all. In the pulpit he spoke with a spiritual fervor and impressiveness that carried conviction to all who heard him. His church was almost always crowded with an attentive congregation. Although after his announcement of a change of belief he was obliged to carry on a controversial warfare with those from whom he differed, he was able to retain the esteem of many, if not all of them; for he was genuinely liberal, maintaining at the same time the right of individual freedom in matters of faith and conscience and inculcating and exemplifying a spirit of tolerance for all.

At the time Mr. Clapp was chosen pastor the indebtedness of the society amounted to \$45,000, and he was unwilling to assume the pastorate unless pro-

vision should be made for the entire liquidation of this debt. More than half of it was immediately raised by a lottery scheme, then considered a proper means for raising money for charitable purposes; while the remainder was provided for by the generosity of Judah Touro, Esq., a philanthropic merchant of New Orleans. He purchased the church building, then standing on the corner of St. Charles and Gravier Streets, and continued to hold it and keep it in repair without conditions for the benefit of the society from that time till it was destroyed by fire in 1851. With the burden of debt removed and under the preaching of an eloquent minister this church prospered and became one of the most influential Protestant churches in the city. It was the church that chiefly attracted the attention of strangers, —a matter of no small moment in a city of which nearly one-half the people in those days were what might be called a floating population.

In the midst of such a ministry the people were overtaken by material disaster in the loss by fire of their church building. It was some time before a new one could be erected; and as the chapel in which services were temporarily conducted was much too small for the congregation, many of the people wandered off to other places of worship or ceased to attend any. Soon after the new church was finished, Mr. Clapp's health began to fail, and he was compelled to resign his charge and remove from the city.

This new edifice stood on St. Charles Street, near Julia, and was named "Church of the Messiah." Then it was that the name "Unitarian" was first adopted by the congregation, although for many years, as we have seen, Mr. Clapp had been preaching Unitarian

doctrines, and the real change from Presbyterianism to Liberalism on the part of minister and people had been wrought long before.

After Mr. Clapp left, Rev. E. C. Bolles, a young Universalist minister of great promise, was settled as pastor, and remained for several years. He was succeeded by Mr. Thomas; but, when war between the States grew imminent, he resigned his charge and withdrew. The pulpit then became vacant, and so remained till the war was over, although services were not entirely discontinued, but were maintained by lay members of the congregation. One who frequently officiated was Dr. Clapp, a physician in the city, son of Rev. Theodore Clapp.

When peace was restored between the North and the South, Dr. William G. Eliot, of St. Louis, came to the assistance of the church. Under his administration a revival of interest took place, and high hopes for the future began to be entertained. His son, Rev. Thomas L. Eliot, took charge; but his health prevented continued residence in the city, and soon the pulpit was vacant again. After this ensued a succession of short pastorates; and under the discouraging influence of frequent changes the number of worshippers began to diminish and the church to decline in strength. Revenues grew smaller, and a debt accumulated. At this juncture Rev. Charles A. Allen took charge, and by his energy and the help of the American Unitarian Association the church was saved, and confidence and hope again renewed. For seven years Mr. Allen remained and did efficient work, but at length was obliged to leave and reside elsewhere to the regret of the people. For several years after this there was no settled minister. The

recent pastorates have been that of Rev. Walter C. Peirce, who was settled in 1893, that of Rev. Henry W. Foote, who followed Mr. Peirce in 1902, and that of the present minister, Rev. Harry E. Gilchrist, settled in 1906. During these years the church has become more firmly established, and is now in better condition than at any time since the war. In 1902 it dedicated its present building on the corner of Peters Avenue and South Rampart Street.

LOUISVILLE.

The establishment of the Unitarian church in Louisville, Ky., according to the Year Book of the American Unitarian Association, dates from the year 1830.

The first pastor of that church was Rev. George Chapman, of Boston, who came to Louisville in 1832 at the solicitation of a few earnest and liberal-minded people to whom the principles of Unitarianism had long been dear. These persons consisted not only of New Englanders, but of others from England, Scotland, Kentucky, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, Indiana, and other States of the Union. They had occasionally held services in various private houses and in the school-house of Mr. Francis E. Goddard, —services which had been conducted for the most part by distinguished visiting clergymen, men like Charles Briggs, John Pierpont, Bernard Whitman, and Horace Holley. Such was the impression made by these preachers that the people had erected a church building, which was dedicated May 27, 1832, by Rev. Francis Parkman, of Boston, and Rev. James Walker, of Charlestown, Mass., afterward president of Harvard University. It is worthy of remark that so devoted to the cause of the liberal faith were these

few people that they completed this their house of worship and paid for it in full even before they had a settled minister. "They loved Unitarianism," a later pastor has said of them, "and they loved it for its cheering views of God and man, of Jesus and his religion, of life and death, of duty and immortality, for its liberal, rational, and at the same time reverent interpretation of the Bible: they loved it for its wide charity and generous fellowship, not exclusive, but inclusive, conditioned not on dogmas or form, but on earnestness of purpose and hearty yearning for moral and spiritual aid."

Mr. Chapman preached his first sermon June 24, 1832. A ministry was thus begun which promised to be full of intellectual and spiritual power; but it was destined to be of short duration, for failing health compelled Mr. Chapman to resign his charge at the end of a year.

He was succeeded by Rev. James Freeman Clarke, who became pastor in the autumn of 1833, and remained seven years. Mr. Clarke was fresh from the Divinity School in Cambridge, having preached but one sermon before setting out for Louisville. At the very beginning of his ministry, he writes in his autobiography, he was confronted by the question whether he should preach Unitarianism as doctrine or as practical Christianity. He decided to lay the main stress of his work on positive Christianity, believing it should be the first object of every preacher to make God seem near to men, to bring consolation to the sorrowful, to dwell on the comfort of God's love, to enforce the duties of life,—in a word, to preach the mastership and leadership of Jesus Christ. It is not strange, therefore, to find in the covenant

which the church under Dr. Clarke adopted Dec. 29, 1833, such a statement as this:—

“We whose names are subscribed, being fully convinced that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God, the only appointed Mediator between God and Man, and being desirous of obeying his commands and forming the Christian character within us, do hereby covenant and engage,” etc.

This idea of loyalty to Jesus Christ and of the formation of Christian character became the keynote of the subsequent preaching of Dr. Clarke; and his deep spiritual insight, his firmness of religious conviction, and his judicial mind, united with an unusual power of illuminating statement, made him a very real helper to his people. Nor was this all. To many who could not accept Orthodoxy, and who in some instances regarded themselves as infidels, his reverent and rational interpretation of the Bible was a revelation and a power. Outside the pulpit also Dr. Clarke did great service to the liberal cause in his conduct of and contributions to the *Western Messenger*, a magazine of a high order which interested a great number of earnest, progressive minds in his own city and elsewhere. Dr. Clarke was well received in Louisville, both by his own people and by the other churches of the city, especially the Episcopalians. Little by little his church grew and prospered, and he came to hold a place of influence in the community, not only through his religious, but also through his educational work. And yet he says of himself that he was not a popular preacher in that place and never should be; and, with this feeling upon him, he resigned his charge in June, 1840, and returned to Boston.

In August of that year he was succeeded by Rev. John H. Heywood, whose pastorate continued for forty years. During these years the church flourished and became one of the largest and most influential in the State. Mr. Heywood was not only active in his church duties, but, like his predecessor, was an indefatigable worker in the cause of public schools and in the charities of the city. Side by side with the Unitarian church in the early days there existed also a Universalist church,—another form of the same liberal tendency of thought which had come to manifest itself in that city. This church, though small, was fortunate in having for its ministers men of marked ability and courage, so that its growth was steady and healthy for some thirty years. Then for various reasons, removal, death, and the war, the congregations declined and services were suspended. Many of its best members united with the Unitarian society; and, when it was decided to erect a new edifice, the money derived from the sale of the Universalist property was added to the building fund of the Church of the Messiah. For with the addition of the Universalist element practically a new organization now took place, the name “Unitarian” being dropped and the present name, “Church of the Messiah,” being adopted in its place. The new constitution of the society—which was substantially that of the Universalists, and superseded that of Dr. Clarke—contained the following liberal statement of faith and purpose:—

“We, the subscribers, feeling desirous to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, do hereby form ourselves into a society, that we may be helpers to each other, and that by

our united energies we may better serve the purposes of religion and of truth."

Prosperous also during these years was the missionary and benevolent work of the church. In 1841, under the leadership of Mr. A. G. Munn, a non-sectarian missionary Sunday-school was established, which attracted to itself a fine body of teachers and did a great amount of good. In 1858-59 an admirable "night school" was established in the hall of one of the fire-engine houses by some of the young men of the congregation: Messrs. Charles J. Kent, Augustus Holyoke, B. B. Huntoon, George Hood, H. P. Truman, and others. This school had a wide influence for good. At the same period there were being carried on two mission Sunday-schools, one by Mr. H. T. Wood, a devoted member of the church, and the other by Rev. D. A. Russell whom the church had engaged as minister-at-large. In 1865 an "Old Ladies' Home" was established, and successfully carried on by its friends till 1882, when it was merged in the well-endowed Cook Benevolent Institution, and its good work guaranteed permanence.

Mr. Heywood's long pastorate was followed by that of Rev. C. J. K. Jones, who, beginning his work in 1879, a little before Mr. Heywood formally closed his connection with the church, continued for nearly twenty years to be a vital and inspiring leader. One break there was in this pastorate, that of a year and a half from the summer of 1883 to the winter of 1884-85, during which Rev. John B. Green officiated as minister. After Mr. Jones's departure in 1898, two short pastorates followed—those of Revs. A. W. Littlefield and Fred. V. Hawley—till the present minister, Rev. William H. Ramsay, was settled in 1902.

The first church building was a small, tasteful edifice with sixty-four pews. In 1853 it was enlarged, and thirty-two pews added. This building stood on the south-west corner of Fifth and Walnut Streets, and was held by the society till 1870, when land was purchased at the corner of Fourth and York Streets, and a beautiful stone building erected thereon and dedicated Jan. 15, 1871. On the last day of the same year this fine structure was destroyed by fire. The congregation, however, immediately set to work to rebuild it, and, aided by generous contributions from many friends in the denomination, within a year successfully replaced their loss.

At the present time the society is in a most healthy condition, and the outlook for the liberal faith in Louisville is bright.

RICHMOND.

As long ago as 1833 there existed a Unitarian church in Richmond, Va., situated on Mayo Street, at that time a fashionable part of the city. The lot on which the church stood had been conveyed in 1831 to Jabez Parker, as agent for the congregation. In June, 1834, when the property had to be sold to pay off the church debt, it was bought in by some of the pew-holders, who themselves subscribed the necessary funds and took a deed of the property. In the following list of some of those who were members of this early church will be found names that were closely identified with the progress and good citizenship of Richmond's past:—

Isaac Davenport.
Mann S. Valentine.
Robert Poore.

John Enders.
Erastus Willey.
B. B. Haxall.

Thomas A. Rust.
 Joseph Mayo.
 John Goddin.
 Isaac Goddin.
 William Ritter.
 Edmund Walls.
 Jacob Mull.
 Blair Bolling.
 William B. Clarke.
 Henry Clarke.
 Jacob Shook.
 George W. Clarke.
 John Howard.
 William M. Fordham.
 Edward Anderson.
 James J. Binford.
 Isaac S. Cary.
 John Early.

Martin Hollins.
 Dr. Robert Briggs.
 Samuel S. Saunders.
 William G. Elam.
 Edward Scott.
 Edward Cox.
 Edmund Steane.
 James McKildoe.
 William Sinton.
 Richard O. Hawkins.
 Giles Stewart.
 James Lyle.
 A. W. Nolting.
 Martin Drewry.
 Samuel Hawkins.
 Samuel Cosby.
 Dabney Garthright.
 Wyndham Robertson.

The subscribers to the fund raised for buying in the church property received shares of stock in the church, which was now reorganized as the First Independent Christian Church of Richmond. Its original name had been the Unitarian-Universalist Church, as appears from an inscription still to be seen on the stone over the entrance of the building. The church has been subsequently referred to under the various names of "Unitarian," "Universalist," and "Universalist-Unitarian," as well as "Unitarian-Universalist." The building had been dedicated in January, 1833, and J. B. Pitkin had been ordained as minister at the same time. For nearly two years before this, however (*i.e.*, from April 21, 1831), he had preached for the society.

The earnestness and zeal of the members of this early church in the cause of liberal religion appear

in the following extract from an old, though undated, resolution:—

“Resolved, secondly, That we do most cordially approve the engagement of a pastor effected by our committee, and that we will use our utmost endeavors to ensure his continuance amongst us, believing that by his virtues, acquirements, and talents the cause of truth and liberal religious principles will be greatly promoted, and those of sectarianism discountenanced and exposed.”

The records of this church from 1835 down to the time of the Civil War seem to have been lost, and its history during that period cannot be accurately detailed. The society must have maintained its existence, however, even though services were not regularly conducted. It was here that Rev. Edwin H. Chapin, the distinguished Universalist preacher, began his ministry. He came to Richmond in May, 1838, when but twenty-three years of age, and for two years and a half did most acceptable work till he was called to Charlestown, Mass., in 1840. Mr. Moncure D. Conway, in his Autobiography, mentions the fact that his cousin, John M. Daniel, preached there at some date prior to 1850, and that he himself also “gave in the long-silent Universalist church there two discourses on the Sunday of January 21, 1855.” During the war the society was disbanded, though the property was held for many years afterward, till it was finally sold and the proceeds divided among individuals by decree of court in 1903.

Ten years before this, however, the church had waked from its long sleep when in December, 1893, Rev. George L. Chaney, then superintendent of the Southern Unitarian churches, began to hold services

in Belvedere Hall. Reorganization was effected on December 31 under the name of The First Unitarian Church of Richmond. The movement acquired a good start under Mr. Chaney's ministrations of a year and a half, and after his withdrawal continued a more or less prosperous existence during the several short pastorates of Rev. J. M. Seaton, Rev. M. K. Schermerhorn, and Rev. A. M. Somers till with the coming of Rev. J. L. Robinson, the present pastor, on Jan. 1, 1904, affairs began to take on new life and vigor. The church is now in a hopeful condition, and on Feb. 18, 1906, completed and dedicated an attractive edifice at the corner of Floyd Avenue and Harrison Street.

Such is the simple story of four of the oldest Unitarian churches of the South. Such were their ministers, and such were some of their prominent members. For three-quarters of a century Unitarian principles have existed in the South,—not simply as intellectual doctrines in the minds of isolated individuals, but as a vital religion embodied in such old churches as these, preached by their ministers and practised by their people. The record of these churches does not show an uninterrupted advance, but it does show persistency and unquenchable vitality. If they have slumbered, still they have not died. Through hardships and struggles, through isolation and persecution, through fire, cyclone, earthquake, through frequent changes of pastors and the ill-health of many of them, through the horrors of pestilence and of Civil War, through the poverty and the misunderstandings that followed in the wake of that war, these churches have still lived, and shown

such a power of renewal and such a persistency of faith as may well convince us that there is something more in this liberal religion than perhaps we have been aware of, and that it really lives by "the power of an endless life." In no section of our country probably have liberal churches been more hampered than here. Situated in a stronghold of Calvinism, few in number, limited in membership, isolated from one another, they have so overcome obstacles and so preserved the faith that in their renewed life of to-day they present us a result that is nothing less than wonderful.

It is an error to suppose that Unitarianism is an exotic in the South, an importation from New England, and that it can only flourish in the cold air of the North. The facts that have been related above do not justify this conclusion. The people of these churches were not mainly New Englanders. Their ministers did not all come from Boston, nor were they all reared under Unitarian influences. Clearly there was a spirit of liberality native in these places. Religion is not a matter of climate. Unitarianism is no more indigenous in New England than is any other form of thought. Long before New England was settled, Unitarianism existed in Hungary and Poland and elsewhere in Europe; and this is not strange, for it embodies the very essence of Protestantism, the very principles of Luther's Reformation, and carries them to their logical conclusion. Beyond all question the story of the early church in Charleston shows that, if this form of religion was in that place imported at all, it was imported not from New England, but from Old England. For it was not the works of Channing, but the works of Priestley, the English Unitarian, whose study influenced the mind of Anthony Forster,

and led him to change his belief. Still more conclusive perhaps is the story of Theodore Clapp in New Orleans. Cut off from Northern associations, too much absorbed in ministering to the needs temporal and spiritual of the people of his beloved city to know what distant scholars were thinking and saying, he yet arrived at these same liberal doctrines of God's love for all,—and arrived at them through this direct contact with the needy and suffering and the close study and direct application of the principles of the Gospels to the work he had in hand. Out of his daily ministering life grew his liberal ideas by a natural process: they were not even an importation from Old England. In how many other Southern lives, if we knew them, might we not find a similar story? The truth is, the times and the people were ready for this movement. Had it not been so, Unitarianism would not have come in the South, even in the measure that it did come. There was a spirit moving on the face of the waters. Among the thoughtful and the progressive in the South this influence was as real as in the North. The truth is, these churches were, in their inception and in their whole subsequent history, not pale reflections of the far-off light of Boston Unitarianism, but in themselves *sources* of light,—the light that lighteth everywhere candid, open-minded seekers after God's truth.

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of Its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; price, \$1.50 *net*; postage, 18 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post Office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

PIONEERS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN AMERICA

Being the Great and Thursday Lectures Delivered in Boston in Nineteen Hundred and Three

Size, 5 1-2 x 8 inches; pages, 396; price, \$1.50 *net*; postage, 13 cents.

THE purpose and scope of this volume cannot be better shown than by giving the subjects and authors of the thirteen chapters which make up its contents. These are: I. "William Brewster and the Independents," by Edwin D. Mead; II. "Roger Williams and the Doctrine of Soul Liberty," by W. H. P. Faunce; III. "Thomas Hooker and the Principle of Congregational Independency," by Williston Walker, IV. "William Penn and the Gospel of the Inner Light," by Benjamin B. Trueblood; V. "Thomas Jefferson and the Influence of Democracy on Religion," by Thomas R. Slicer; VI. "William Ellery Channing and the Growth of Spiritual Christianity," by William W. Fenn; VII. "Horace Bushnell and Progressive Orthodoxy," by Washington Gladden; VIII. "Hosea Ballou and the Larger Hope," by John Coleman Adams; IX. "Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Teaching of the Divine Immanence," by Francis G. Peabody; X. "Theodore Parker and the Naturalization of Religion," by James Eells; XI. "Phillips Brooks and the Unity of the Spirit," by Samuel A. Eliot.

The chapters making up this book were delivered as lectures in Boston in the spring of 1903, and attracted much attention. The purpose of the lectures and of the book is to set forth some of the great principles through which religious freedom in this country was achieved, and the connection with these principles of the great men who advocated them and gave them their power and enduring vitality. These thirteen champions of religious freedom were truly pioneers in the work in which they became so conspicuous, and no one can so fully realize the significance of our present freedom of thought in religious matters as by reading these accounts of the inception and growth of the religious principles which constitute so valued a part of our religious inheritance.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

A list of free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional and practical works, will be sent to all who apply.

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WHAT IS IT TO BE A LIBERAL IN RELIGION?

BY

REV. CHARLES W. WENDTE

PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

MAR 4 1917

WHAT IS IT TO BE A LIBERAL IN RELIGION?

MATTHEW ARNOLD somewhere suggests that in the interests of clear and honest thinking we cease to employ all words which have been spoiled by long-continued theological misconception and misuse. Among these "spoiled" words, to many of us, is the term "liberal."

The prevailing idea of what it stands for is so sadly confused and misleading that at times one is tempted to abandon it altogether; and, in characterizing the new, progressive movement in religion, to employ some other term free from the intellectual bewilderment and abuses of the past, and less likely to be misunderstood by the present generation. Yet the word itself is such a noble one, and so closely interwoven with modern thought and usage, that it seems worth while to redeem it and restore it again to its rightful office,—to designate that prevailing element in the religious life of our day which distinguishes it from the rigid, unprogressive, and traditional systems of the past.

Let us see if we cannot come to this right understanding of it, and vindicate its continued employment in the service of a rational and spiritual Christianity. And, first, let us learn what liberalism is *not*, thus freeing our minds from any mistaken notions concerning it. We shall arrive at this desirable result in the quickest way, perhaps, by the use of a concrete

illustration suggested by the religious life of the New West.

When one of our missionaries enters a town for the purpose of founding therein a congregation of free thinking but religiously inclined persons, he usually sends out an invitation to all in the community who are "liberals" or liberally disposed to attend his services. A motley collection of people usually responds to that appeal. Among them are believers of every school of religious opinion, as well as unbelievers in any religion whatever,—old and new style Unitarians and Universalists, the mildly or liberal orthodox, representatives of the Spiritualist faith, Christian Scientists, Theosophists, Progressive Friends, and Swedenborgians, and many forms of individual eccentricity which remind one of the poet Coleridge's dictum. After a particularly oracular utterance he was asked, "Of what church may that be the doctrine?" "That," said Coleridge, "is the doctrine of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Infallible Church, of which I am at present the only member." To these must be added free thinkers of every possible shade of opinion and of no opinion; agnostics who do not know, indifferentists who do not care to know, sceptics who claim we cannot know; atheists who deny the validity of all religious ideas; secularists who wage a fierce polemic against all churches, ministers, and beliefs, and hold that enlightened people (like themselves) have gotten over such pitiful superstition; materialists who are positive that they alone possess the true philosophy of life.

To add to the difficulty of our missionary's task there is the greatest difference also in the intellectual capacity, the culture and moral outlook of his hearers.

There are among them men and women of the highest intelligence, the broadest views, the most inclusive sympathies, and others of the densest ignorance, the narrowest prejudices, the crudest opinions, the most bigoted and scornful temper. And, as one who has had large experience tells us, "what is worst of all, the combative, narrow-minded men, whose whole ambition is iconoclasm, and who are liberal in nothing save in the quantity of vituperation which they hurl at churches, preachers, and religion, are commonly the loudest in their claim of being liberals; while the real liberals, of genuine intelligence and breadth of view, and charity towards others, whose aim is constructive rather than destructive, and who are working thoughtfully to build up a better religion instead of tearing down what religion there is in the world,—these are likely to be comparatively quiet and retiring. Thus often the loud-voiced iconoclasts and destructionists are the class of men that get to be known in our communities as liberals. And, unfortunately, when liberalism is spoken of, men think first of these as its representatives. In this way the cause of real liberality in religion is put in a false light, and seriously hurt."

Such are the varied, incongruous elements which flock to hear our missionary, and which he is to attempt to fuse and organize into a "liberal" church. For widely as they differ from each other, fiercely as they often antagonize each other's beliefs, they all alike claim to be "liberal."

Like a true apostle and fisher of men, our missionary casts his drag-net out into the deep, and is often surprised at the miraculous draught which is the result of his labor. Therein are big and little fish of every

school and kind; and not a few crabs, devil-fish, and other freaks are entangled in the net, which he could well afford to dispense with altogether.

Now, if the minister is a large pattern of a man; if with strong personal convictions and a clearly defined aim in his ministry he also cherishes a broad, inclusive spirit, has a lively sense of humor, and great store of patience, unselfishness, and persistent purpose,—in a word, if he is a natural leader and organizer of men, he will not be overcome by such obstacles. He will see beneath all these diversities of opinion some common ground of agreement and action. He will be able to speak the reconciling word that inspires his fellow-workers, for the most part, to mutual goodwill and united service for truth, justice, and humanity. Thus he will strengthen the spiritual instincts of their nature, and lead them to the larger trusts and hopes of the religious life,—God and Immortality.

It would seem, then, that a proper understanding, a right definition, of this oft-quoted, much-abused term “liberal,” is greatly to be desired in the interests of clear thinking and spiritual faith.

What is it to be a liberal in religion?

1. Certainly a man is not liberal simply because he holds advanced or radical opinions. Whether he is liberal or not will depend on the spirit in which he holds them. If that spirit is narrow, unsympathetic with others' thought, scornful, intolerant, and irreverent,—such a man is not a liberal. He is a bigot, no matter how freely he has discarded the traditional creeds or how vehemently he denounces the authority of pope, council, church, or priesthood.

On the other hand, a man who still clings to these, who accepts the old dogmas and cherishes the tradi-

tional forms of piety, if he displays a broad and kindly temper towards those who differ from him in opinion, if he is ready to believe in others' sincerity, and is charitable towards their views, if, in a word, he is "reverent towards others' reverence," that man is a liberal, no matter how orthodox his creed may be.

Herein lies the justification of the current term, "liberal orthodox." Strictly speaking, according to the correct use of language, to call a person liberal orthodox is as irrational as it would be to speak of him as free bound or rightly wrong. For orthodoxy implies a correct belief, it stands for infallible authority in matters of faith,—the authority of church, creed, or scripture. It gives no countenance to any laxity of views, any individual independence of judgment. It permits no tolerance to dissent, no liberality towards heretics. But men's hearts are usually larger than their minds. They are not always logical in their conduct, whatever they may be in their theological opinion. Happily for themselves and the race, many who claim to be orthodox in their theology are truly, however inconsistently, liberal in their sympathies. They may occupy orthodox pulpits, but they are more truly to be reckoned broad-minded and liberal men than are many so-called free thinkers. For it is not the holding of this or that set of opinions, however advanced, but the spirit in which they are held, which marks the true liberal. It is a great misfortune for the cause of free thought in religion that this is not more generally recognized by the advocates of a rational faith. The mistaken notion widely prevails among them that a man is liberal simply because he is opposed to orthodox forms of belief. The man who vehemently denounces the inherited traditional

creeds and institutions of Christendom, and ridicules and heaps scorn upon those that uphold them, usually justifies his course on the ground that he is liberal.

And yet, if my contention be true, he is simply a narrow, prejudiced, intolerant fanatic, only—a fanatic for free instead of conventional religion. Both types are equally unlovely and harmful to the cause of true religion. But the radical bigot is more hateful than the orthodox, because the logic of his principles ought to teach him to the contrary, and lead him to employ more sympathetic and gentle methods in religion. Orthodoxy, if consistently carried out, naturally leads to intolerance and persecution. But heterodoxy should prompt to the largest forbearance, charity, and kindness. The worst displays of illiberality to-day are to be found in the free thinkers' conventions and the columns of certain of their newspapers, while not a few professedly orthodox journals are weekly illustrations that men may profess the traditional views and yet display the most broad and reconciling temper.

2. But now it should be added that, if zeal for advanced views in religion doesn't necessarily constitute a liberal, neither does indifference to all religious views. Here we touch upon another mistaken notion current among free thinking people. Such will often tell you that a man's creed is of no importance. It is his conduct by which he must be judged. Indeed, it is almost a cant form of speech for such to say, "It doesn't matter what a man believes, so that his life is right." But this is a mere sophism by which we deceive ourselves. It will not do thus to underrate the importance of intellectual opinions in religion. What a man believes really has a great influence on his character and conduct. If you were about to employ a

physician, you would not say that it didn't matter what school of medicine he belonged to, what theories of disease he held, or what he believed the therapeutic effect of his remedies to be. If you were seeking a farmer to take charge of your farm or orchard, you would not think that his opinions about soils and crops and methods of cultivation would make no difference in his conduct of your affairs.

Why, then, should you suppose that a man's religious opinions will have no influence on his moral life?

It may not always be easy to trace this influence in the case of individuals. For, as has already been said, individual believers may hold their opinions very loosely and be a great deal broader than their avowed creeds. But even these, if we examine closely into the sources of their conduct, will be found to have certain interior convictions or principles of action which color and shape their lives, and which are their true creed, whatever they may profess to believe.

On the larger plane of social and national life, however, it will be easy to show that true intellectual beliefs are of vast importance to mankind. The creed of a people largely determines the character of that people. The creed of the Hindu that this material universe is an illusion, and that life is a vain and undesirable thing, is largely responsible for the nerveless, hopeless, apathetic character of their civilization.

The Inquisitor in Spain believed, in common with his age, that God hated and punished everlastingly all heretics. This belief profoundly affected the acts of a Torquemada and his priestly colleagues. They thought they did right in torturing and destroying thousands of their fellow-men. Will any one claim,

in the lurid light of such testimony, that it makes no difference what a man believes? How can his life be right if the interior convictions and principles of action which guide that life are not right? Our life, in a true sense, is only the expression of our beliefs.

Another illustration: A few summers since, in Switzerland, I observed, as others have observed, the great influence the creed of a people has upon the life of that people. As I passed from the Protestant to the Catholic cantons, I found a vast difference between them. It was not a difference in race or of antecedents or of social conditions or of government. They are the same people, to all appearances. The climate, scenery, material environment, industries, and pursuits are essentially alike. It is their mental attitude towards nature and life which is so wholly unlike, and alters their entire demeanor and outlook, so that they do not seem like the same people. This difference is seen in all the relations of their domestic, industrial, social, and political life. Their dress, manners, conversation, and the general aspect of their farms, villages, and towns, display it. It is a difference grounded in diversity of creeds, conceptions of the universe, and of moral and religious duty. Thus Roman Catholic religion produces one type of character and civilization, and Protestantism another type. The difference between an Englishman and a Frenchman, a German and an Italian, a citizen of Belfast and one of Tipperary, is not so much one of race or environment: it is one of religion.

The opinions we hold on these great questions are, therefore, of profound consequence to our personal and social life. The Scripture says truly, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

To be liberal, therefore, is not to hold this or that set of opinions. It is not to antagonize other people's opinions. It is not, finally, to have no opinion at all. Liberalism is a temper, an attitude of the mind,—a disposition of the heart towards truth. Liberalism is the supremacy of the spirit over the letter in religion. It is the mind in a state of growth, and is thus distinguished from orthodoxy, which is the type of a mind that has stopped growing, which accepts finalities in religion, and claims that its opinions are infallible.

Liberalism recognizes that all opinions are more or less fluctuating; but it clings all the more firmly to the interior principles, the great central convictions which determine the character of individuals and people.

What are these principles? One of them is that we may trust the veracity of the human reason; that a divine thought rules the universe, and our human thought is its faithful reflection. Our reason does not, indeed, teach us everything; but, so far as it goes, it is trustworthy, and it goes far enough to give us a right interpretation of nature and an adequate philosophy for the ordering of our lives.

Liberalism furthermore affirms that all thought is free, that to attempt to cram it into dogmatic formulas, and thus arrest its growth, is a crime against nature and an impiety against God. The true liberal recognizes that there should be progress in religion as in all else. He keeps his mind open to every influence that will increase his knowledge, enlarge his mind, and improve his character. He seeks to grow as the plant grows, as the tree adds layer to layer, as the whole creation develops the ever-increasing purpose of its Maker. In a word, the liberal thinker is an

evolutionist in his philosophy. He believes with the poet,—

“Through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the
suns.”

The true liberal maintains, moreover, that, while belief profoundly affects conduct, yet conduct in turn is the true test of belief; that men's deeds reveal, and justify or condemn their creeds. He holds that thought is good, but life is better, and that he is most likely to lead a noble life who has the clearest vision of truth and is most faithful to his ideals.

Once more, liberalism believes in sincerity in matters of faith. It fearlessly utters its honest convictions. It abhors cowardice, it deprecates mental reserve, it despises hypocrisy. It speaks the truth fearlessly, but it speaks it in love. For love is the universal solvent which melts even the rigidity of dogma and tradition. No mind can be truly free which entertains a hateful, scornful spirit against another mind. The true liberal not only tolerates, but loves his fellow-man. He is charitable to their intellectual errors and sympathetic with their endeavors after truth. He reverences their reverences. He knows how gradual is the change from one set of opinions to another. Therefore, he is not impatient with error, if it be error held in the spirit of truth. The only unpardonable sin in his eyes is uncharity,—a loveless heart, an intolerant mind.

This is our answer to the question, “What is it to be a liberal in Religion?” These are the liberal things which the liberal devises, and by which he shall stand. This is the true interior spirit of Christianity. “The hour is come when the true worshippers shall worship

the Father in spirit and in truth." "The spirit of truth shall lead you into all truth." It is the teaching of Paul. "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "Serve the Lord in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of the letter." Finally, it is the prevailing temper and purpose of our Unitarian Church, which, in the language of the hymn we sing together so often, declares:—

" The seekers of the light are one,"—
 One in the freedom of the truth,
 One in the joy of paths untrod,
 One in the soul's perennial youth,
 One in the larger thought of God,—

The freer step, the fuller breath,
 The wide horizon's grander view,
 The sense of life that knows no death,—
 The life that maketh all things new.

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of Its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; price, \$1.50 *net*; postage, 18 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post Office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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There are two forms of membership in this Association provided for those who desire to cooperate in the spread of liberal religious thought and influence:

I. *Life Membership.* Any individual may, by the payment of \$50, become a *Life Member* of the American Unitarian Association. Such a person is entitled to vote at all business meetings, to receive the Year Book and Annual Report, and, by means of frequent communications, is kept in touch with the various enterprises promoted by the Association.

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APR 2 1917

THE STORY OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

BY

REV. JOSEPH MAY, D.D.

Published for free distribution

American Unitarian Association

25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

APR 12 1917

THE STORY OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

At the beautiful spring season the people of the Christian world very generally unite to celebrate the supposed resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Influenced by association and sympathy and by the love of a festal occasion, many of our Unitarian congregations are wont to mark the period with tokens of gladness and services of rejoicing.

In most cases, I think, our people attempt to make some discriminations as to their motives in participating in the Easter occasion. They seek to give to it the significance of a celebration of the revived life of nature in the spring or the deeper sentiment of a festival of human immortality.

It is, I fear, difficult to make such discriminations clear; and, as I have reason to think that, at present, belief in the physical resurrection of Jesus does not widely prevail among us, as I myself unqualifiedly disbelieve in the event, I feel it to be a duty to state, formally, the dissenting view in regard to this crowning miracle of the traditional history of Jesus.

I do not believe that Jesus rose from the dead, except by that spiritual resurrection by which all the children of men, on the dissolution of the body, pass into a new life beyond the grave.

The story of his physical and earthly resurrection is, in my judgment, mythical,* not historical.

In this opinion in regard to the narrative I suppose that I am accompanied by the large majority of the clergy of our church, and equally by the large majority of our laity. Our scholars are, I think, unanimous in the same view. To state the position of liberal scholars in a word, they find it easier to account for the existence of the resurrection-narrative as a myth than to justify so exceptional an occurrence as historical on the evidence on which it rests.

Prominent among such scholars, and one of the latest to discuss the story in detail, was the venerable Rev. James Martineau of England, the most spiritual of our preachers; at the time of his death perhaps the ablest of English metaphysicians, who brought his scholarship down to the latest date; and who in his "Seat of Authority in Religion" examines this question elaborately, and convincingly exhibits the mythical character of the resurrection-story.

A more recent work by Professor J. Estlin Carpenter, of Oxford, occupies the same position, and clearly exhibits the mode of development of the whole mythical element in the New Testament.

Even among members of the Orthodox Christian communion the beginnings of the same process of thought are plainly seen, which, by explaining, explains away the miraculous element in these ancient narratives.

As was said many years ago by an eminent scholar and preacher of our body, the miraculous element is no

* "I call any story a myth which for good reasons is not to be taken historically, and yet is not a wilful fabrication with intent to deceive, but the natural growth of wonder and tradition, or a product of the Spirit uttering itself in a narrative form."—*Rev. Frederic H. Hedge, D.D.*

longer a prop and support of the Christian tradition. It is a weight which Christianity has to carry. Jesus is not believed because he worked the miracles. The miracles are believed because men are reluctant to detach from his revered personality any elements which have been felt to contribute to its dignity.

Elsewhere, certainly outside the Bible, the Protestant world of to-day unanimously rejects all miracles.* The Catholic Church professes to believe them of many of her saints of the present as well as of former generations. In this she is more consistent; for the one effective philosophical argument for the miracles of the New Testament is that which makes them still a part of the order of nature,—operations wrought by powerful human wills, in virtue of a high spirituality and of unfamiliar but genuine natural laws. This obviously justifies the expectation of such works by other men of exceptional spiritual and moral force as well as by Jesus and the Apostles.

In this expectation, however, we are disappointed. Protestantism, at least, does not find authentic modern instances of miracle. Even the miracles of the New Testament, other than those of Jesus, are seldom, I think, enlarged upon, if maintained, by our modern scholars; and I doubt if intelligent and educated Romanists believe very heartily in those of to-day which are reported among their communion.

The position upon which I rest in the discussion of

* But in 1748 the denial of the post-apostolic miracles by Middleton occasioned as profound a shock to religious sensibility as did the publication of Strauss's mythical theory of the gospel miracles in 1835. In the third century a similar treatment, by Origen, of the Old Testament narrative equally offended the religious world. See Rev. Dr. Hedge's admirable discussion of the mythical element in the New Testament, in his "Ways of the Spirit," where the spiritual truth and value which may attach to myths is luminously shown.

the present question is this. The story of the resurrection of Jesus is only a part of the tissue of miracle which a credulous, unscientific age wove instinctively into the tradition of his life and death. It grew out of the same causes, its acceptance and propagation depended on the same conditions, as did the others. While the legend of the miraculous birth, with its attendant angelic phenomena, is more fanciful, it is of exactly the same kind of narratives; and, while the Christian consciousness, by a refined and elevated instinct dismissed the trivial stories preserved to us in the apocryphal New Testament, these are, also, of the same kind, originating in the same way, and only differing in their want of dignity and suggestiveness.

I will not here discuss with you the origin of the belief in miracles and the particular subject of the miracles of the New Testament. If you share, as I suppose you do, the present wide-spread incredulity on this subject, you are fully justified by the famous dictum of an acute philosopher of the past century, whose sceptical vein made him odious, but who in one brief logical statement exhausted the argument. Hume maintained that, in every case of alleged miracle, it is more likely that testimony should err than that a miracle should have occurred.*

The Christian world has struggled with this pregnant aphorism for a hundred and fifty years, but it has not escaped from it. Instinctive recognition of the truth which it pithily expresses has led to a

* Hume's exact language is "that no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish. And even in that case there is a mutual destruction of arguments, and the superior only gives us an assurance suitable to that degree of force which remains after deducting the inferior."

steady decline of belief in the miraculous as science, intelligence, and culture have advanced.

The result is admirably exhibited by Lecky, in his "History of European Morals," where his examination of the subject of miracle is as luminous as it is convincing. In the face of whatever evidence there is, belief in miracle always declines with growing popular intelligence. Lecky's remarkable discussion may also be summed up in a *dictum*. It is not, he shows, that the occurrence of miracles is discredited by argument. It is that, as intelligence advances, miracles cease to occur.*

It has not been, indeed, by demonstration of their scientific improbability that the miracles of the New Testament have lost credit with so many persons. It must be admitted that, on sufficient evidence, we must believe anything, no matter how unusual or how subversive of what we have hitherto determined. In these days of science we all understand and acknowledge this. We cannot pretend to limit by former experience the scope of the unknown forces of nature or of the mind.

But the ground has simply been taken from beneath the Scripture miracles of either Testament, and others by our better understanding of the nature of the writings in which their occurrence is recorded and of the working of men's minds in unscientific periods and in circumstances like those of the early followers of Jesus.

That in the New Testament we have a body of thoroughly innocent writings, documents essentially genuine, and in spirit, purpose, and intention truth-

*Lecky's "History of European Morals," vol. i. pp. 368 and following.

ful, is a statement which no one would seriously qualify.

Here are invaluable relics of the literature which grew up, as any such literature grows up, in the first century or two of Christianity; but the popular idea of what these writings individually are, how they were composed, what is their authority as testimony, is probably very imperfect, if not incorrect. Putting aside all question of their miraculous inspiration, which I need not consider here, the documents of the New Testament present to the student a problem in many respects very intricate.

The Gospels, with which we are now chiefly concerned, appear to the superficial reader as the artless accounts, by well-informed persons, of the life and preaching of Jesus as they had severally known them. We are accustomed to read these narratives as if they came, in form and directly, from the hands of his companions or near contemporaries. Tradition sanctions this view. But, so stated, it requires careful qualifications. The first three Gospels, in their present form, date, probably, from periods ranging from forty to seventy years after Jesus' death. It is possible that portions of their contents were even written down earlier,—perhaps considerably earlier,—or that they were founded, partly, on earlier narratives. But, in the largest part, at least, the traditions of Jesus' life and words had survived orally, and so continued, doubtless, for a generation, perhaps for half a century.* As we possess them, these first three Gospels are not, as they perhaps seem, the accounts by their authors of what they personally knew of Jesus, his

* Westcott's "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," pp. 181 and following; Carpenter's "First Three Gospels," p. 61.

life and his death. What is true is this. The first three Gospels contain the popular traditions which were current in the Christian community concerning Jesus about half a century after he had passed away. They preserve for us what was then generally believed about him. They include exquisite fragments of his remembered utterances. They contain hints enough of his character to enable us to form a very distinct and trustworthy portrait of him, which is immeasurably precious. But, after all, they are properly described, not as careful biographies by competent, nearly contemporary witnesses, but as anonymous compilations of the traditions of their period.

Thus these writings reflect their period. They are, in a literary sense, artless. They are beyond cavil truthful in spirit and purpose; but they preserve the biography of Jesus as affected by all the prepossessions of such an age and by the ideas and theories which had begun to grow up about him, including, naturally and inevitably, the element of miracle, the marvelous, the supernatural.

They could not have come from that age, and not have included this element. It was alive and ubiquitous in the thought of that period. It was expected and looked for in any remarkable career. Of any exceptional man who should present himself as a religious leader, the people were prompt to ask, "What sign showest thou that we may believe?" * Miracle being a thing of every-day life in men's belief, its supposed manifestations were described as naturally and artlessly as any other events.

The Fourth Gospel is to be distinguished in some

* John vi. 30; also ii. 18. See also Matt. xii. 28; Mark viii. 11; Luke xi. 16, etc.

important respects from the other three. It is not merely a compilation of popular traditions and relics of Jesus, such as Luke in his preface expressly describes his own narrative to be and implies that the others were. The Fourth dates from a much later period,—say A.D. 140,—and is properly a tract, written with a purpose, which it candidly avows (chap. xx. 31), to exhibit Jesus in a peculiar character, as the Hebrew Messiah and the Son of God. It is the work of a single hand,* and, as such, possesses unity, homogeneity, and consecutiveness in its literary structure. But the tradition that it is by one of the twelve apostles, stoutly as it is defended, is actually a most slender thread, and is visibly yielding to the strain which modern scholarship is putting upon it. For one, I do not believe this Gospel to be by an apostle. So far as its historical contents are concerned, then, they are still, in substance like those of the others. They are still no more than the current popular tradition, amplified and developed by the passage of another half-century. The Fourth Gospel adds nothing to the validity of the testimony of the other three. In fact, its comparative literary artificiality, its later date, and the fact that it was written with an avowed dogmatic purpose, characteristic of a developed stage of Christian opinion, diminish the value of its historical testimony. It cannot be appealed to with the confidence with which we refer to the others for historical evidence.

To repeat, then, what we have in the Gospels is substantially this,—a compilation of the traditions which were floating in the Christian community forty, fifty,

* And one much too highly cultivated, I cannot but think for that of a Galilean fisherman.

sixty, or a hundred or a hundred and fifty years after Jesus' death, and of the relics preserved of his teachings; these materials, originally fragmentary and anonymous, edited and connected together by sympathetic and intelligent hands with such art as they had. They possess, in their details, not the authority which belongs to the asseverations of a trustworthy eye-witness, but the value which attaches to the popular traditions of a sincere, innocent and adoring, but credulous, unscientific, easily deluded community of disciples, more than ready to believe miraculous tales.

It is utterly impracticable for the intelligent mind of the present day to be overborne in its judgment of the ways of God by the testimony of such authorities, or would be so but for the influence of custom and of the long-established veneration which these documents have naturally secured. As containing all that we know of Jesus and his utterances, they are beyond estimate precious. We may be infinitely grateful to have so much. We can but admire their simplicity, their candor, their purity, dignity, and grace. But such popular traditions, however charmingly composed, cannot command our belief at points where they would upset all that in the brightest light of the present age we seem to know of God and nature. And, fortunately, it is now possible to analyze them, and largely to account for the phenomena which they present.

Compendiously stated, it is the result of recent scholarship to show with much clearness how the more marvellous characteristics attributed to the person and career of Jesus are the reflection back upon them of a subsequent period, when the popular faith had highly, but unnaturally, exalted him, and popular imagination had had time to develop the simple facts of his actual

career into the remarkable forms which, at certain points, his story has come to wear.

It is impossible now to tell just what Jesus' disciples thought of him while living; for we have no unqualified testimony to this point, all our testimony having been worked over in the popular mind repeatedly before it took its existing forms of statement. But the things of a marvellous nature recorded in the Gospels, if true, must have been known to his actual companions and early disciples,—for example, his miraculous birth and its attendant prodigies, the visit of the wise men, the descent of the Holy Spirit as a dove at his baptism, and the attestation of his peculiar sonship to God; yet of these things there is no trace in the body of the Gospels, where the life of the apostles with their Master is recorded. They are never even referred to, much less appealed to, in justification of any claims of a supernatural quality or commission for Jesus. They are obviously myths, which grew up in later day, and were projected back into the history from the time when Jesus was fully established as a supernatural character in the faith of his people. This is very generally admitted, of the events I just specified, by intelligent persons to-day.

But the same, I would have you see, is essentially true of all the rest of the miraculous element in the story of Jesus. If we had the real facts, uncolored by tradition and credulous imagination, we should probably find that Jesus' actual followers neither knew him to work miracles nor perhaps so believed while he was with them. But they wondered at his great endowments. They began to theorize about him and to think him some peculiar being. They accepted him as the Messiah of the Jews, and the next age made him the Son

of God. Then the events of his life took on, by degrees, supernatural quality and form and color. The ardent faith of his followers inevitably, but insensibly, filled out the picture of his life and deeds with details imperceptibly growing, into which the miraculous largely entered. What was natural became supernatural. Incidents wholly mythical attached themselves to the story. And in this condition we have received it.

This process, as I intimate, was in no sense intentional or dishonest. It was by the spontaneous action of the mental and moral forces of such a time. It is by no means peculiar to the case of Jesus, but paralleled in many others.* We can even see it, in qualified forms, going on around ourselves in the cases of individuals who become highly idealized in the popular imagination. It is even a little less extensive in its results in Jesus' case than we usually suppose. The purely thaumaturgic miracles ascribed to him, like the turning of water to wine, the blasting of the fig-tree, and the stilling of the storm, are quite few. A number of the others are plainly misconceptions or exaggerations of natural facts, as the finding of money in the fish's mouth or his walking on the water. The great bulk of the miracles are those of healing, and may almost all represent a power of influence over the minds of the sick, which in its essence would not be uncongenial to so elevated and forcible a character as his, and which is exaggerated rather than perverted in the reports of it which we have received.

But, in the form which they wear, these stories are plainly mythical growths, the product chiefly, if not wholly, of the period succeeding the death of Jesus, when faith in him had become intense; when he was

* See Carpenter's "First Three Gospels," p. 152, following, and p. 204.

fully believed in as a special and supernatural character; when he was eagerly expected to return from heaven, put an end to the existing order of things, and reign with his saints in a glorified state age-long.

The only wonder is that the miracle-stories of the New Testament are not more extravagant than they are. No doubt there was a large body of others, of a more melodramatic quality, like those preserved in the Apocryphal Gospels, which the Christian consciousness, as I have already said, rejected as trivial and unworthy before the canon of the New Testament was closed. Stories of this inferior sort maintained credit with the less educated of the Christian people, as to-day ignorant Catholics believe many fanciful tales of the Madonna and the saints which their educated fellow-churchmen deride. The superior minds (as those must have been who addressed themselves to the compilation of Jesus' story in these four standard biographies) naturally rejected almost all of these.*

Here, then, is what I would have you observe. Our modern consciousness does but reject the whole miraculous element of these and other ancient traditions as that of the early Church rejected the more absurd and undignified stories of the kind which popular belief attached to the history of Jesus.

To the modern mind all tales of miracles are trivial.

It is a tempting but always treacherous task to try to account for the origin and growth of particular

* I may say here that the history of myths abundantly shows that the period between the death of Jesus and the publication of the earliest of the Gospels provides more than ample time for the forces which produce the mythical elements in such a history to work. Myths are not necessarily a thing of slow growth. Often they spring up, as it were, in a night. The shortest possible allowance of time before the materials embodied in the Gospels took their shape in literature is more than sufficient for the mythical elaboration and coloring to have been effected.

mythical stories. It has been well that this task should be essayed as it was, for example, in that monumental work, "The Life of Jesus," by Strauss. But it can never, in any case, be finally convincing. At most, all that one can do in this way is to show how a mythical story may have arisen, and thus to make reasonable the contention that it is mythical. It is pretty easy to account for the story of the money in the fish's mouth as arising in the fact of Jesus' directing his disciples to sell a fish, and so obtain the money; or for that of his walking on the sea as a mistake for his walking by the sea. But such explanations become uncertain as they become intricate, and we are not to hazard a clear conviction that the mythical tendency is a real one upon our success in showing how it may have worked in particular instances. At such a distance, to explain how a certain mythical narrative grew up corresponds in form very closely to the impossible logical task of proving a universal negative.*

We may detect myth in a thousand cases where we cannot possibly explain its particular mode of growth.

I do not propose, then, to attempt to show in detail how the story of Jesus' resurrection grew up. One who rejects it as mythical is by no means bound so to do. To justify the reasonableness of its rejection as authentic history, it is sufficient to detect beyond question in the New Testament the presence of an extensive mythical element, from which come the narratives of Jesus' miraculous birth, with its attendant angels and their celestial songs, of his various miracles, and of his resurrection and ascension, and to

* See Lecky's "History of European Morals," vol. i. p. 373; Carpenter's "First Three Gospels," pp. 152, 207.

refer each and all of these stories to the one common source.

Yet it is quite obvious to any thoughtful student of the times, and of the circumstances of the immediate followers of Jesus, what general causes pressed urgently upon them, and favored the belief, which became so intense and effective among them, that he had risen from the dead. Not difficult for men of that generation to accept and credit, it was, on the other hand, absolutely essential for them to have the support and comfort of such a belief. They would have been utterly desolate and hopeless without it. In this sense the continuance of the movement depended on it, and stood or fell with it.

The disciples of Jesus had become fully possessed by the conviction that he realized the Messianic hope of the Jews. While Jesus, if he accepted it for himself, highly spiritualized the Messiah idea, his followers to the very last, as the Gospels plainly exhibit, thought of it in the conventional, mundane sense common to their nation's imagination. It was to be the glorified but earthly reign of the Messiah over his redeemed people.

The arrest and crucifixion of Jesus suddenly blasted this hope, as applied to him, and filled his disciples with consternation. The whole structure of their selfish anticipations was thrown down. Personally, his nearer followers were left most forlorn,—alone, without their leader, in a strange city, and in danger from the Jewish hierarchy and the Roman government on the one side and from the populace upon the other.*

* Up to Jesus' death, it should be remembered, his avowed disciples, especially the twelve apostles, were almost all Galileans. They had accompanied him to Jerusalem on his last journey, full of hope in his manifestation of himself as the Messiah; and, when the tragical result occurred,

But, with a little time for the restoration of their composure amid familiar scenes, their hope, which had been for the moment prostrated, would begin to revive. In the actual immortality of the souls of men, Jews of that period were widely accustomed to believe. At least, they were all familiar with the idea. The large and influential Pharisaic party cherished it ardently, although the other great sect, the Sadducees, denied it. The first reassuring thought of the disciples, doubtless, was that Jesus, though dead, was not dead, but still in being; that he was in paradise, and that thus, though in ways different from their former expectations, his Messiahship might still be realized and vindicated.

If he was still in being, the idea that he should manifest himself to some of his followers would have presented no difficulty to men at that time. The spiritual element in men has always, to the ordinary mind, seemed to consist of matter in a state of extreme tenuity, and therefore capable, under some conditions, of becoming tangible to sense.

A very slight cause among persons of that day, and in the circumstances of Jesus' disciples, would have set in motion the belief that he had manifested himself to some of them; and, once started, such a belief would have spread like wildfire.

It is exactly thus, in response to deep necessities of the heart, that myths arise and propagate themselves.

If, for example, it was the fact that, on visiting his tomb a day or two after his interment, the sepulchre was found empty; if Jesus' body had been removed

they were far from their homes, and, indeed, like sheep without a shepherd. It is not at all wonderful that they were for the moment astounded and dismayed, and forsook him and fled. The traditions intimate pretty clearly that after his death they did what was most natural,—hurried back to Galilee.

by its custodians, for which there might be many good reasons; if it could not at once be discovered, and its absence was not explained,—the inference might readily, and very likely immediately, have been drawn that their Master had arisen from the dead.

If, as the tradition in all its actual forms describes, the first visitors to the tomb were women, their more excitable and imaginative natures might easily have been impressed, by some half-seen object or slightly peculiar experience, with the notion that they had met angels or other heavenly messengers.

That the body of Jesus disappeared seems the only essential condition of the legend having birth; and to its disappearance the tradition points quite definitely. Matthew tells us that the Jews declared it to have been removed by some of the disciples,—a very credible statement, though rejected by the evangelist. It is the ingenious hypothesis of some that Joseph of Arimathea, who had allowed it to be laid in his new tomb, removed it, lest its presence there should lead to some commotion and embroil him with the Jews.

It seems probable, at any rate, that its disappearance was, in the excited state of mind of the disciples, the original source of the belief in Jesus' resurrection. This cause may have operated at once, and the idea of his return to life may have been generated in those two or three days. It is, perhaps, more probable that it did not spread so suddenly.*

In the Second Gospel we have the simplest—probably, therefore, the most primitive—account of the events after Jesus' death. That Gospel properly terminates at the middle of the last chapter, as is indicated

* See Martineau's "Seat of Authority in Religion," p. 372.

in the Revised Version. Here, in this earliest form of the story, there is properly nothing supernatural at all. How such a tale grows is interestingly seen on comparing this primitive form of it with the elaborated accounts in Matthew and Luke, and still more with the later one of the Fourth Gospel.

At the moment it might very well be that the disappearance of Jesus' remains should set in train a hundred wondering doubts and hopes and theories. That the agitated women at the tomb saw something strange, saw somebody in white, saw Jesus himself,—steps like these would readily be taken by a body of persons otherwise crushed in their dearest hope, and not in the least fortified by science and mature intelligence against miraculous beliefs.

In fact, what is especially noteworthy about the stories of the resurrection is (as I have remarked about the miracle-stories of the Gospels generally) that they are not more abundant and elaborate than they are.* In the authentic portion of Mark, Jesus' resurrection is affirmed, but no reappearance is described. And even the appendix (doubtless a wholly genuine relic of the early Christian literature) adds only the briefest statement, not description, of three appearances, of which the latter, at least, is almost incredible, if only from the light in which Jesus is placed by it and the disregard by the eleven apostles of his solemn injunction.

In such vague and general assertions of a fact did this afterward confident and wide-spread belief arise.

Matthew's narrative is actually but little more elaborate or more definite. It is stated that an angel ap-

* This, to my mind, points to a later rather than an immediate period for their origin.

peared to the women, that Jesus himself appeared and briefly spoke to them, that afterwards he met the eleven in Galilee, though some doubted that it was he; and this is all.

In the Third Gospel, which was written, probably, after the lapse of nearly or quite three-quarters of a century after Jesus' death, the account is somewhat further amplified, and its details are a little more definite in form.

But it is not until we come to the Fourth Gospel (which was written, as I have said, under the full prepossession of, and with the avowed purpose to exhibit, the Sonship to God of Jesus, and probably not before A.D. 140) that we have a collection of highly elaborated narratives of the intercourse of the risen Master with his disciples.

I have no hesitation, therefore, in my view of the strictly mythical origin of the story of Jesus' resurrection. An examination of the statements in regard to it made by Saint Paul, who is the only nearly contemporary witness whom we are able to identify, only confirms the opinion that it grew essentially out of the primary conviction that the Messiah could not die; that Jesus was, therefore, alive after his seeming death; that he appeared, in some ethereal form of manifestation, to his followers. Paul had, of course, no personal knowledge of the facts of Jesus' life. He expressly states how little he cared for or examined the testimony of the original apostles. It is altogether doubtful if he regarded Jesus as having risen in the same body which was laid in the tomb. Paul places the appearance of Jesus to himself on the occasion of his conversion {which certainly, if real, was a visionary manifesta-

tion) fully and exactly on a plane with his appearances to the other disciples.

Certainly, whatever be true as to the event of Jesus' return to life, he never effectively resumed his place among living men after the event of his death. Whatever reappearances of his person are alleged, they are all of a phantasmal character. He enters through closed doors while men are speaking of him. Men doubt about his identity. He is mistaken for a "spirit." The scenes are all dramatic and unreal. Not one of the alleged Christophanies occurred in the presence of opponents or in public, unless we so class the occasion, barely asserted, but not described, by Saint Paul, when Jesus is affirmed to have appeared to "above five hundred at once." On several occasions the incredulity of some of the witnesses is a marked feature of the occurrence.

One especial word. We must not be misled by the exceeding simplicity and naturalness and artlessness of the gospel narratives into mistaking these characteristics for the tokens of historic validity and accuracy. These qualities in the New Testament literature betray, certainly, as I have said, the truthful spirit of the writers, and their ingenuous confidence in the reality of the events which they narrate. But, as repeatedly intimated, to men of such an era miraculous events were as likely to occur as any others; and they therefore describe them with the same naturalness and simplicity as normal ones. And, when men report with truthful spirit what they themselves believe, the embellishments with which they unconsciously and instinctively round out their narratives will, usually, be as natural in form, as artless, as truthful-seeming, as the rest of their narrations.

In a word, as applied to the relations of truthful men, describing what they themselves receive as fact, verisimilitude is not a test of historical truth.*

When a man is consciously trying to deceive, his inventions almost inevitably betray him to a critical reader; but, when what he tells is true to himself, nature will speak in his unconscious exaggerations as clearly and as simply as in the rest of his story. The legends of the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament are narrated with the same *naïveté* as that which appears and charms us in the narratives of Jesus' miraculous acts. In the passage† where Moses meets Jehovah, to renew the tables of the Law, the narrator (as has been remarked) describes the appearance to a mortal man of the Almighty Creator of the universe in the same simple terms with which he tells of the man's arising in the morning.

Finally, I would refer to one particular objection very gravely urged by some to bar a doubt of the historical reality of the event of the resurrection of Jesus.

It is said, if this event was not an historical fact, then the faith of the orthodox Christian world, at a most crucial point, rests upon a delusion.

I think that it does so rest.

Nor is there anything remarkable or exceptional in

* Professor J. H. Mahaffy, the eminent student of Greek history and literature, commenting on the artlessness of the style of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, remarks as follows: "I am convinced that all the critics, even Grote and the sceptical Germans, have overrated the accuracy of the pictures of life given in these poems. They have been persuaded by the intense reality and the natural simplicity which have made these scenes unapproachable in their charm; and they have thought that such qualities could only coexist with a faithful and simple reproduction of the circumstances actually surrounding the poet's life. But, surely, this argument, irresistible up to a certain point has been carried too far." ("Social Life in Greece," p. 11.)

† Exodus xxxiv.

this. For it is abundantly illustrated by the facts of the history of religions that, while the moral influence and spiritual value of any form of faith must always be largely in proportion to the reality and truth of its historical and its spiritual sources, the practical issues of faith in belief and act are powerful, not necessarily in proportion to the validity of its foundations, but to its own warmth and vividness. And in the history of religions these qualities have often been exhibited in connection with beliefs the most baseless as to fact and most illogical as to theory. The world-religion which stands next to Christianity in vitality and force, the Mohammedan, certainly rests largely upon illusions. Many of the sects of Christianity have inspired their members to labor unweariedly, to suffer with the utmost fortitude, and to die without flinching in support of the claims of wholly visionary leaders and for points of doctrine which to Christians of to-day seem trivial. In Mormonism we have had an instance in our own time, and at our own doors, of fanatic zeal by no means dependent on or proportioned to the authenticity or the reasonableness of the basis of a religious system.

And, if it be true that the mighty arch of orthodox Christianity has rested with one pier upon an event which we now determine to be unhistorical, this only parallels the fact that with the other it rests upon pure myth in the story of Adam and Eve and the Fall of Man.

Happily, it is upon firmer and more intelligible foundations that our modern Christian belief in the immortality of the soul rests.*

* The American Unitarian Association will send, upon application, statements of the reasons for belief in immortality.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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THE WONDERFUL HOPE

BY

REV. CHARLES F. DOLE, D.D.



PUBLISHED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON

THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
WAS FOUNDED IN 1825 WITH THE
FOLLOWING EXPRESSED PURPOSE

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, passed the following vote at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.”

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

APR 12 1917

THE WONDERFUL HOPE.

It is very easy to repeat lightly the words, "We believe in the Life Everlasting." But ask ourselves what we mean by these words, and we are filled with wonder at the splendid audacity of our thought. We cannot define what we mean; we cannot tell what immortality is; we cannot explain how the gulf between this life which we know and the unknown life beyond the gate of death can be spanned. We simply aspire and hope for this unknown life. We think that it will be altogether richer in joy, nobler in companionship, fuller of the sweetness and light of affection, infinitely more constant and satisfying than the mere gleams of life that flash upon us and then fade where we now live. This is nearly all that we can say by way of describing our hope. We believe that we face life, and not death.

The standing wonder is that we hold such a hope. What marvellous instinct is behind it, reinvigorating it in every generation? Death is everywhere. We each expect to meet it. Nevertheless, there is that in us which expects not to die. It can hardly be a merely material world in which this bold and tremendous hope comes to birth and survives and lights up men's faces,—peasants and thinkers, poets and men of affairs, who say in many tongues, "We hope."

The fact is that we live here and now in a world of

wonder and surprises. Science in no respect lessens this sense of wonder. Ever the range of the possibilities of the universe widens. Our science pushes its investigations daily into a broader circumference, only to meet afresh the realm of mystery,—the vast unknown. The most that science has yet done is to change our attitude toward the unknown. We had feared it as the realm of darkness; we have learned now to have confidence in it as the realm of light and law. But the wonder and the mystery, however lighted up with the sunbeams of growing intelligence, order, and unity, still hold their unfathomable depths. What is this marvel of life, here and now? Whence does it flow? What imposes the laws of unity upon it and inspires both thought and aspiration? There is, in fact, no peculiar difficulty about the hope of the life to come. Every essential difficulty inheres in the wonder of the life that now is. Who shall explain this life of which we say that we know? We herein believe in the most wonderful and inscrutable fact.

Say, if you will, that “now are we the sons of God.” This is a mighty thing to believe. Say that we are the children of the microscopic amœbas, and you have said nothing less wonderful, without in the least satisfying our intelligence. Let us be modest at the outset, and grant that the element of wonder and mystery is no reason why the thing which the mystery shrouds is not real.

It is often vaguely supposed that the modern or liberal churches with their untrammelled free thought, with their utter release from all absoluteness of authority, of a book or a church or a pope, are somehow fatally handicapped as regards the hope of immortality. Others have some assured and solid certainty: these

have nothing but a little shifting philosophy. Others have witnesses and proofs: these can give no valid reason for their faith. There could be no greater error than to think thus.

The truth is that all knowledge of every sort, so far as it is real, is the common heritage of the human race. There can be no monopoly of it. Whatever Roman Catholics or Theosophists know, we all know. They cannot, if they wished, keep their proofs or evidence in a corner. Whatever is good is good for all men and will prove itself good.

Many think that there is actual intercommunication between the inhabitants of this world and "the spirits of the departed," who come back to this world and give demonstration of their continued existence. Suppose that we do not happen to feel satisfied with the evidence for these supposed facts. Nevertheless, all that is valid in them is valid for all, as much as for those who confidently believe the "spiritualistic" doctrine.

Good and true men believe in the resurrection of Jesus. Other good and true men see no reason to believe the stories of a bodily resurrection. But, whether men believe or not, the fact, whatever it may prove to be, belongs equally to doubters and believers. The case is as if certain bonds and securities were put into our hands. We may count them at their par value or we may think them dubious or even worthless: it makes no difference as to their reality what we do with them, whether we put our confidence in them at once or depend upon other sources of income. The securities, such as they are, are ours. Burn the paper on which they are printed, if you choose, yet all the facts of the world are registered, and as soon as they bring in

actual returns they go to the credit of all of us. We, then, who are cautious in our valuation of the securities which men offer us for the hope of immortality, suffer no lasting disadvantage, even if we prove in the long run to have undervalued some of the certifications which have been presented to us. Meanwhile we have plenty of excellent ground, more than men usually put to service, out of which our hope grows.

I wish now to show that our hope of immortality, so far from being an uncertain and tenuous thing, really belongs in the same class with the most substantial facts which constitute life. If it ever seems vague, cloudy, and uncertain, it is because everything in which we most fondly believe is equally vague and uncertain,—in other words, because it belongs to a realm of “the things unseen.”

Thus we all believe in the reality of love. Life would not be worth living without the fact of love. We are as sure of love as we are sure of any fact or of our own existence. Yet love is altogether indefinable. We know it without being able to describe it. No one can see it or measure or weigh it. We know only its manifestations, so far as it comes into our lives from outside. Even so, it expresses itself through the most subtle and indescribable modes of sensation, through the glance of the eyes, the pressure of a hand, the tone of a voice, a look or a smile. It is invisible, and “only a sentiment” in ourselves or in the hearts of our friends. But the solid earth and the “everlasting hills” are not so real as love is. No one makes love any less real to us by calling it a “sentiment.” We rightly believe that the unseen world of sentiment is the real world in which we live. Now the hope of immortality belongs in the same real world.

Take another tenuous sentiment; namely, honor. Let us make light of it, as we easily can. Hear the greatest of our poets, as he derides honor. "What is honor? A word. What is in that word, 'honor'? What is that honor? Air. A trim reckoning. Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. Therefore, I'll none of it. Honor is a mere scutcheon." Does any fool take Shakespeare seriously in this outburst? On the contrary, we put the passage into the hands of our children to read in their schools. Whom does Shakespeare make to say this bit of folly? No hero, no king, no man of science, says this word, but a poltroon and a libertine. Who cares what this mere body of a man, Falstaff, says about honor? Whatever he says is only the foil that brings out in relief all the better what the great poet and all his readers know honor is. Let any one deride honor, even in a bar-room, and there sets in a revulsion of feeling in the other direction. If the honor of an honorable man is not real, then nothing is real. In fact, it is because honor is real that houses and lands and gold coin and bills of exchange have their value.

Truth is another subtle, vague, and invisible thing. What is truth? Play with the question, if you like. The more precious it is,—the truth of men, and not merely the truth about things, the truth and constancy of the universe, by virtue of which we, its citizens, not being at the sport of chance and chaos, depend upon what we call law,—the more needful and precious truth is, the harder it becomes to define it by the measure of words. Nobly do Mr. Haeckel and Mr. Huxley and all the masters of science bow before the voice of truth, as if this purely mystic thing,

Truth, were a god. Whatever Truth bids, they must say; where Truth leads, they must follow, be the cost what it may. Yes, they sometimes tell us, "In the name of Truth we must renounce our faith and our hope,—sentiments only, which no science can prove." Think what these men thus say. "In the name of a sentiment, Truth, itself invisible, we must throw away another sentiment." Can they not see that these wonderful sentiments belong together, in one and the same realm? Can they not see that their own splendid reverence for truth, their willingness to say of the Truth, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," is itself of the same inscrutable order with all the most real things, honor and love and hope? Why, indeed, must I follow, as I surely must, this heaven-born instinct to go with the truth, and not also follow the kindred instinct, to go also with the noblest hopes of our common humanity?

Here, again, in the same list of glorious but quite invisible realities is the moral life, the sense of "ought," or duty. Is it not a reality? Does any one choose to ridicule it or to think it out of the world? You can do this if you choose. Hear, for example, the famous and quite plausible ancient passage in one of the Wisdom Books:—

"For we are born at all adventure: and we shall be hereafter as though we had never been:

"Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present: and let us speedily use the creatures, like as in youth.

"Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments: and let no flower of the spring pass by us:

"Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds, before they be withered:

"Let us oppress the poor righteous man; let us not spare the widow, nor reverence the ancient gray hairs of the aged.

"Let our strength be the law of justice: for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth."

This passage strikes every normal man exactly like Falstaff's words about honor. He who makes light of justice, purity, humanity, the sense of duty, we all feel (may we not say *know*?) is not a sane or whole man. Something has happened to him, like the work of disease. We do not trust his sight. On the other hand, we do instinctively trust our sentiments of duty. We may make our mistakes, but some universal, magnetic current felt in all of us commands our souls in the direction of righteousness and humanity. The fact is no less impressive and overwhelming, because we may not explain at all how it works. It is ill for us, if we do not own its sway. For all that life means is bound up with the fact of our obedience to it. Now what we urge is, that the strange mystic instinct in us towards the hope of the immortal life is of the same substance and order with the gravitating force of conscience to whose command we all, at our best and sanest hours, bow.

I have ventured once or twice to use the word "faith." Of course, I had no reference to any dogmatic or sectarian use of the word. I meant that sentiment which, whether men recognize it or not, underlies all positive thought or effort. Strictly speaking, we know nothing: we are experimenters, pioneers, learners, children. We live and move, then, by virtue of our faith or trust in the people about us, in the material that we handle, in the future before us, in the universe that constitutes our home. As a rule

and on the whole, that which we see or know or learn gives us confidence in what lies beyond, around, and before us.

Thus we believe in matter and the atoms of which it is composed. No one knows just what matter is. No one has seen an atom of it. But we believe or trust it. Handle it, study it, use it, obey its conditions, and it will react kindly toward us; it will serve and obey us; it will do us good, and not evil; it will tell us the truth about itself. This is our faith,—the faith of science. It is not blind faith, indeed, but it is a sentiment, like all the other sentiments, impossible altogether to define, explain, or measure. Our feeling or sentiment is that the universe is right, is veracious, is significant, is good to live in. It is allied to all our sentiments, and is of the nature of religion. Our working value as efficient and practical men is more or less according to the strength of this sentiment. To have it in abundance is intellectual health and sanity.

Here, now, are certain great but actual elements that constitute man's life, just so far as it is a man's life, and not merely animal. These elements, all akin and interwoven, are love, honor, truth, duty or conscience, faith. Hope is only another of these items of life. They are all as invisible as the strange atoms of which we glibly talk. There is also a truly infinite element in every one of them. Love or honor, or loyalty to truth and duty, must go beyond all cost and measure, or else it is not genuine. Imagine the love of a mother or a patriot that only goes up to a certain defined measure of sacrifice and then stops short. Imagine Mr. Darwin following truth only so far as it is popular, and then renouncing his quest. Imagine any honest man to become purchasable, at however vast a price. The

wonder of these vital elements of life is that they transcend all measures. Hope also behaves the same. Bound it by the term of a single life or by the atmosphere of this world or by any limit beyond which it must not go, and hope, like love or duty, being thus cut off from the infinite ranges, ceases or dies.

You will indeed sometimes find those who seem to deny what they call "personal immortality." But these very persons are likely immediately, as George Eliot did, to assume the same vital reality, under cover of the "immortality of influence" or goodness or the immortal life of the human race. As if here were not the same mystery of unceasing life as before! As if influence and goodness could be "immortal" at all, unless in persons also immortal! As if the limit of hope to the finite life of this planet, though it should last through a million generations of noble lives, were not in the end the same death-blow to hope as the limitation of a person to this earthly lifetime is! The truth is that faith, hope, love (the most substantial elements that make us what we are), can never brook any question of their own, and therefore of our, essential significance and reality.

I suppose that we touch at this point upon what Theodore Parker and others have called their "intuition" or certainty of the immortal life. The name is not important: the word "intuition" causes obvious objections. We wish to be very modest in claiming a species of certainty that others do not share. But it is in the nature of all of us to believe in truth, honor, justice, love, as deathless facts. Their realm, we say, is immortal. Now we, at our best, belong in this realm, and these items of life constitute our best selves.

There is a process of thought here, like what we

follow in asserting our food values. It is possible to set up doubts of the efficacy or the need of foods, and certainly of particular kinds of food. Sanguine people might assure us that we may get such command of our bodies as some time to outgrow the need of food. We may even try sceptical experiments in cutting off various elements of diet. We cannot tell just what food does to nourish us. Nevertheless, there is an incurable appetite and instinct in us for the simple elements that constitute our food. We leave out the nitrogen or the carbon, or the tiny trace of iron or lime to our peril. Anæmia, disease, death, presently threatens us.

So with the elements that make man's life most characteristically human. You can doubt one or another of them, and experiment and play with them, but every one of them immediately reasserts itself. You leave out any one of them at your peril. You leave hope out at the loss of fulness of life. You cut hope down from its normal hold on the infinite, and force it into mortal limits, whether threescore years or millions of years, and you have cut at the source of life itself. You cannot breathe as well. The power, the joy, the significance, which belongs to normal life, drops away. You have worked the same injury to human life in setting a limit to hope as you would work in setting a limit beyond which the conscience or the love may not act. We urge that this is an extremely interesting fact, of which every one has to take account.

We turn now to another class of facts. Multitudes of people tell us that they hope for the immortal life on the ground of an event in the history of Palestine nearly two thousand years ago. We venture to set this aside.

However important it may seem to others, it does not now concern us. It would raise controversy to use it. What we wish to press, however, is the indisputable fact, about which all the resurrection stories centre, of a very illustrious and beautiful human life. The man who taught the beatitudes and loved and consorted with all kinds and conditions of men, and finally died forgiving his enemies, arrests the attention of the world. Why? Because, as all the world believes, he lived the kind of life which every one ought to live. Here was a normal man, true-hearted, faithful, outspoken, fearless, altogether humane and companionable. Here was a man who lived as any one and every one would live who really believes this to be God's world, or a universe. He lived by the rules and in the terms of what we call the "immortal life." Thus love, honor, faith, conscience, truth, hope, described this man's essential nature, as color, weight, specific gravity, crystallization, describe a gem. Let us try to understand what the fact of this one life signifies.

It had been open to wonder what this world was for, where it came from, what message it had (if any at all) for its inhabitants. It had been a changing, developing universe through an unknown time. Brute force had seemed to play through it. Pain and sorrows and physical death were in it. Beauty and gleams of intelligence were also in it, but animalism mostly prevailed. Any visitor here from another star would have fairly asked, On what intelligent lines does all this seeming waste of motion run?

It was as if some one had come for a day to look on at the clearing of a vast tropical plantation. He would see piles of earth and clumsy machinery and the toil of men and animals, and vast cost, and little besides,—

no flower gardens, no fruit, no settled homes, but only a chaos of the long preliminary processes through which a plantation in the wilderness is reduced to order.

Let our stranger now come later and look again. Amidst the stumps of the ancient trees on the edge of the forest they have put out a thin line of plants, oranges it may be, bananas, or pineapples. Observe attentively, and you will find somewhere a single ripened fruit hidden among the leaves. Taste this fruit, and now you know what the plantation is for: you do not need to go and ask the master proprietor what he is about or why he put out so great an expense. The sight and the taste of that one fruit are his answer and his justification for the toil of his men.

So, when you once set your eyes on the acknowledged facts of Jesus' life, you have the answer of the spirit of the universe to the age-long question: What is this world for? It is as if God had spoken aloud. This kind of fruitage is worth the infinite cost of the world. All the meaning of the ages of the slow evolution is concentrated here in this single specimen of the ripened fruit. Such is the mighty doctrine of evolution, translated into the terms of religion. Nothing less than the terms of religion will meet or describe the nature of the facts.

We have said that the mystery of the world is resolved as soon as we see one face that bears what we call "the smile of God," as soon as we hear one voice that cries cheerfully, "The Lord reigneth," or, "All is well." To see the perfect fruit of goodness in a noble man's life is an answer, as long as we see it, to all our distressed questions about the purpose and design of the world. Deathless hope is in this man's face.

Hope springs in us at every word of such a man's voice. Why? Because our highest intelligence is satisfied with this answer, and with nothing less. Do you still ask, Why? We cannot explain the fact any more than we can explain why we are moved and rested and satisfied with certain music. We are musical by nature. So, as some one has said of man, we are by nature "incurably religious."

There is not, however, one good life only, or one great voice, or one face of a godlike man. We cannot say when—long before Jesus came—the fruitage began to show here and there on the wonderful tree of life. Wherever such faces appeared, with the light of love in them, whenever such voices of courage and hope were heard, men were irresistibly moved and swayed to believe in a righteous world; that is, to have faith in God. Wherever the good fruit of the universe showed itself, men hoped the more. And their hope became finer and worthier.

Moreover, as the ages roll on, we see no longer single and rare specimens of the good fruitage of the world, but whole clusters, more or less ripened. Groups, communities, villages, nations, become touched by the increasing warmth and light. There is not a village, or hardly a neighborhood, in which we cannot point to one or another true-hearted man or sweet-natured woman, hidden it may be in modest obscurity, who bears the same kind of witness to a spiritual purpose in the universe which Jesus bore on the larger scale of history. If all men were like this man, we say, all men would be immortal and fearless. If the world moves to give us fruitage like this, everything that has ever happened in the toilsome, costly processes seems now to be justified. It is a wonderful world, no doubt, thus

to create men, after the fashion of sons of God. It does create such men. If it ripens us into such men, it is enough. Their unfailing characteristic is faith, love, and hope.

Neither do we have to wait till we find fully grown and all-round men. Gleams of color and hope shine daily out of the ordinary human life, wherever you watch people. Heroes of the storm, life-savers on our coasts, rude sailors venturing everything for the sake of their comrades; heroes of the shop and the forge and the railway engine, standing at their posts in unseen peril or wreck; nurses and physicians in hospital wards, brave children, patient mothers,—show us continually the eternal lines on which somehow human character is made to grow. Blossoms of beauty everywhere presage the coming of new harvests of the indestructible life of God, coming to birth in the souls of men.

This is not to deny that there is another aspect of life which often distresses us. We may sway in our moods from hope to grief and back again. It is well for us to be modest in our hope, lest we merely hope, and do nothing efficient to make our hope real. The figure of the new plantation serves us again. We look away from the fruit, and straightway we see the cost of toil needful yet before the plantation will bear continuous fruitage. We sway in our feelings between a law of effort and the law of satisfaction, as we sway between hunger and sufficiency of food.

A constant series of personal experiments goes on, both positive and negative. We try to live as if the good life were alone real, and as if the great spiritual values of justice, love, and fidelity, were the only lasting values. We find that, living thus, we are always at

our best. We have rest and power on this side. The common life is filled with new meanings. We fall away and try the opposite or negative course. We let material values choke our souls; we are buried in clouds of fear and doubt. Life and even the physical health droop. We cease to be fully men. We lose clearness of intellectual vision. Human life is not normal on the side of the darkness. It becomes normal at once, as soon as we return to the attitude of those who trust, love, and hope.

"Be practical: use your intelligence," men often cry. And we reply: This is just what we are doing. The ideal things are the most practical. There is nothing so real, forceful, efficient, as faith in God and a good hope are.

The authority that we seek for the hope of immortality is cumulative. We hear at first only a few voices. Then we hear other voices, as it were singing to us. Then we try our own voices,—we who had thought that we could not sing, who had had no use for music. And, lo! it proves that singing is one of the great natural functions of life; it expresses life; it deepens life. To sing is human: to forego singing is to be less human. To learn to sing is to learn to live more richly; it is not only to enjoy more, it is also to accomplish more. Witness the sailors as they heave anchor together.

So in this high realm of the spiritual realities. To sing with those who love and hope is doubtless fuller and therefore truer or more real life. Not to sing is to lose in life. And life, by some irresistible instinct in us, is what we are made to seek.

And now at last a mighty chorus of voices seems to surround us and bear us up with them in their

song. The clear notes of the master singers and poets lead them. The multitude of the brave and true are with them. The sweetest souls we ever knew are among them. They sing ever a song of unconquerable hope. How can we have the hearts of men and not take up the music of this song!

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